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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

SAMUEL JOHNSON'S IMAGERY,
IN THEORY AND PRACTICE, IN THE LIVES OF THE POETS

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
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BY

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled Samuel Johnson's Imagery, in Theory and Practice, in the "Lives of the Poets," submitted by Derril Clive Butler in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Date *October 9, 1962*

ABSTRACT

The great modern critical concern with imagery is also manifest in Samuel Johnson's Lives of the Poets. His comments about imagery, which recur frequently enough to justify calling ~~it~~^{them} a "theory," deal, roughly, with two aspects of imagery, the comparative and the sensory. With regard to the former, he advocates that the elements of a comparison should come from areas as divergent as is possible without seeming strained, and that imagery should stimulate both the intellect and the emotions - the former by being clearly illustrative of an abstract idea, and by being literally true to nature on both sides of the comparison. With regard to the sensory aspects, he expects that imagery should be drawn from all areas of human experience and be as sensory and concrete as is possible without perverting its true function of illustrating the truths of general nature. This theory, which anticipates most of the general principles of modern theories of imagery, is an effective critical tool used repeatedly by Johnson in the Lives to help determine the poetic merit of the works of the various poets with whom he is concerned. This same theory is demonstrated to be both relevant and sound when applied to Johnson's own imagery in the Lives. The high quality of this imagery, and the contribution that it makes to the Lives is largely accounted for by the great extent to which it exemplifies the principles of Johnson's theory.

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INTRODUCTION

It is very possible that someday the twentieth century may be labelled the age when the poetic image came into its own. Great poets of every age have been masters of imagery and have made it the soul of their poetry, but literary criticism has not always recognized this fact. Imagery has long played second fiddle to other critical concerns such as the perpetual question of establishing whether the proper function of poetry is to teach or to delight. This age has changed that. The flood-gates have been opened, and a veritable torrent of scholarship dealing with imagery has been poured onto the field of literary criticism. Imagery is now recognized as the very essence of poetry, subordinating all other aspects. The original impetus for this development is generally ascribed to Coleridge, and it does seem apparent that his theory of imagination and his ideas on imagery are the foundation of modern scholarship in this field. However, perhaps we tend to overlook what the previous century contributed to Coleridge and to modern theories of imagery. He did not work in a vacuum. At ~~least~~ one critic in the eighteenth century had already said a great deal about imagery and drawn some important and helpful conclusions.

The name of Samuel Johnson is not usually associated

with imagery, either in theory or in practice. This thesis is an attempt to show that it should be; that his theory of imagery is an important part of his literary criticism and a significant contribution to modern theory, and that because his imagery in practice fully exemplifies his theory it is an important and effective element in The Lives of the Poets. It is hoped that this study will contribute something to present knowledge of imagery, to knowledge of the historical development of critical opinions about it, and to our understanding of the literary art of Samuel Johnson.

Because no one has yet produced an authoritative definition of what constitutes imagery, it is necessary to establish here a working definition for this thesis. Most modern theorists suggest two essential qualities of an image: it must refer to some primary sensory experience (the five senses plus the kinaesthetic sense), and it must make this reference not for its own sake but for the purpose of shedding a new light on some non-sensory idea. An image must both evoke a specific sense impression and illustrate an abstract idea. This definition excludes comparisons of abstract with abstract or of two totally subjective ideas, since no sense-impression is evoked. It excludes comparisons in which the concrete element is not sufficiently defined to evoke a specific sense impression. For example, "sin is foul" may be considered to be an image

but I would exclude it because "foul" evokes only a very general sense impression rather than a specific one. This definition also excludes pure description or evocation of a sense impression for its own sake, even, as is usually the case, if this sense impression is evoked metaphorically by comparison with another. True imagery must involve a metaphorical comparison that presents an abstract or non-sensory idea in terms of a sense impression. This definition does include personification, providing it is the personification of something abstract into something made concrete enough to evoke a definite sense perception.

The definition of imagery we have adopted has been suggested by many modern authorities. For instance, C. Day Lewis says that he understands a poetic image to be, in its simplest terms

... a picture made out of words. An epithet, a metaphor, a simile may create an image; or an image may be presented to us in a phrase or passage on the face of it purely descriptive, but conveying to our imagination something more than the accurate reflection of an external reality. Every poetic image therefore, is to some degree metaphorical. It looks out from a mirror in which life perceives not so much its face as some truth about its face.¹

Middleton Murry is in agreement with these essentials:

The word "image," precisely because it is used to cover both metaphor and simile can be used to point towards their fundamental identity; and if we resolutely exclude from our minds the suggestion that the image is



solely or even predominantly visual and allow the word to share in the heightened and comprehensive significance with which its derivative "imagination" has perforce been endowed - if we conceive the "image" not as primary and independent, but as the most singular and potent instrument of the faculty of imagination [in its Coleridgean sense], it is a more valuable word than those which it subsumes: metaphor and simile.²

I.A. Richards suggests substantially the same definition, although he believes that too much importance has been attached to the sensory qualities of images. "What gives an image efficacy is less its vividness as an image than its character as a mental event peculiarly connected with sensation."³

Wellek and Warren suggest the characteristic feature of imagery to be "that of the sensuous image revelatory of the imperceptible."⁴ Johnson's Lives have many images according to this definition, and, as will be demonstrated, it is particularly suitable to this thesis as it accurately expresses what Johnson liked imagery to be.

The thesis will have two parts: the first will be devoted to Johnson's theory of imagery; the second will be an analysis of his imagery in practice. Both parts will be based primarily on his major piece of work: The Lives of the Poets. However, many relevant comments from his other critical writings will be brought in to ensure that the ideas presented here are accurate and fully representative. Certain aspects of his use of imagery in his two major poems and in Rasselas will also be investigated in order

to shed, by comparison, further light on his use of imagery
in the Lives.

PART I - JOHNSON'S THEORY OF IMAGERY

(1) The Meaning of "Imagery" in Johnson's Criticism

One of the most frequently recurring words in Johnson's criticism is "image" or "imagery." Unless his use of the word is clearly understood, a great many of his critical comments seem either incomprehensible or trivial. Johnson defines "Imagery" in his dictionary as: "representations in writing; such descriptions as force the image of the thing described upon the mind." A mental "image" is: "an idea; a representation of anything to the mind; a picture drawn in the fancy." Used as a verb, "to image" means, "to imagine." The imaging faculty, therefore, is the imagination or the fancy - exactly synonymous terms, as demonstrated by the fact that one of his definitions of "Imagination" is "Fancy;" and the fact that when he defines "Fancy" he calls it: "Imagination." According to these definitions then, Johnson thought of imagery, whether as a mental activity or as the quality or aspect of writing that stimulates that activity, as vivid pictures of reality, or "lively touches of nature" represented to the mind. Usually the representations or descriptions to which he applied the word "imagery" are sensory, but occasionally he refers to non-sensory ideas, or memories as images. One of his

dictionary definitions of an idea is: "a mental image." It is probably as a synonym to "idea" or "thought" that Imlac uses the term "image" in this statement:

I am less unhappy than the rest, because I have a mind replete with images which I can vary and combine at pleasure. I can amuse my solitude by the renovation of the knowledge which begins to fade from my memory and by recollection of the accidents of my past life. (Rasselas, Ch. XII)¹

Johnson means the same thing when he says in his Life of Dryden:

The author having the choice of his own images, selects those which he can best adorn; the translator must, at all hazards, follow his original, and express thoughts which perhaps he would not have chosen. (IX, 425.)

Occasionally Johnson applies the term at once to sensuous representations and unsensuous thoughts as he seems to be doing when he praises Milton's L'Allegro and Il Penseroso for having its "... images ... properly selected and nicely distinguished." (Milton, IX, p. 157.) This practice is fully justified by the fact that the sensuous vividness of a fully visualized mental picture differs quantitatively rather than qualitatively from the sensuousness of more abstract ideas. Language is composed of a great many metaphorical words having various degrees of life or ability to conjure up pictures in the mind's eye. But even the deadest of metaphors retain some suggestion of the primary physical sensation from which they sprang although frequent use may make it completely unnecessary or even irrelevant

for the mind to consciously respond to it in order to grasp the meaning. This makes it very difficult to decide where to draw the line between image and idea, if the modern criterion of sensuousness is made a distinguishing feature of imagery. The distinction is really only that between more sensuous and less sensuous rather than between sensuous and non-sensuous.

By applying the term "imagery" in the great majority of cases to "more sensuous" representations, or those which do require an actual concrete realization of some primary physical sensation, Johnson's criticism does incorporate and predate the most fundamental principle of modern theories of imagery. He usually thought of images as being representations by imagination in the mind, of sense impressions. Imagery in literature is arrangements of words or descriptions that will stimulate such representations in the mind. Few modern critics have shown a greater craving for sensuous imagery in literature than Johnson, and few have more persistently recommended this as one of the primary sources of pleasure, or insisted more absolutely upon this as one of the basic ingredients of truly great imaginative literature. The eighteenth century in general believed with William Taylor that "a man has imagination in proportion as he can distinctly copy in idea the impressions of sense: it is the faculty which images within the mind the phenomena of sensation."²

Johnson's dictionary definition of Imagination is in full accord: "Fancy; the power of forming ideal pictures; the power of representing things absent to one's self or others." In his definition of Fancy the representations formed are of "things, persons, or scenes of being," all of which suggest concrete sense impressions, not abstract ideas. His critical writings abound in uses of the word "imagination" in this sense. In his Life of Pope he talks about "Imagination, which strongly impresses on the writer's mind and enables him to convey to the reader the various forms of nature" (XI, 193.) Speaking of the poet Thomson he says:

He looks around on Nature and on Life with the eye which Nature bestows only on a poet, the eye that distinguishes in everything presented to its view, whatever there is on which imagination can delight to be detained (Life of Thomson, XI, 235.)

Most of his uses of the word "imagery" or "image" show clearly that he was thinking of the more concrete sense impressions as opposed to the more abstract general thought. He applies this concept of "imagery" to investigate Milton's art. Speaking of the pastoral form he says: "... whatever images it can supply are long ago exhausted" (Milton, IX, 15.) Of Comus he says:

A work more truly poetical is rarely found; allusions, images and descriptive epithets, embellish almost every period with lavish decoration The invitations to pleasure are so general that they excite no distinct images of corrupt enjoyment (Milton, IX, 157-8.)

Milton's greatest problem in creating poetry out of the subject matter of Paradise Lost was "... that immateriality supplied no images" (Milton, IX, 174.) About Milton's poetry in general he says:

But his images and descriptions of the scenes or operations of Nature do not seem to be always copied from original form, nor to have the freshness, raciness, and energy of immediate observation. He saw Nature, as Dryden expresses it, through the spectacles of books. (Milton, IX, 168.)

Milton, however, is one of the few poets whose imagery has certain qualities that enable him to write successful blank verse:

Blank verse, left merely to its numbers, has little operation either on the ear or mind: it can hardly support itself without bold figures and striking images. (Roscommon, IX, 220.)

Of Waller Johnson says:

... His thoughts are for the most part easily understood, and his images such as the superficies of nature readily supplies His thoughts are sometimes hyperbolic, and his images unnatural. His images are not always distinct (Waller, IX, 267, 268, 270.)

An important reason for Dryden's greatness is the power of his imagery:

His works abound with knowledge and sparkle with illustrations. There is scarcely any science or faculty that does not supply him with occasional images and lucky similitudes. (Dryden, IX, 392.)

Praising Dryden's Essay of Dramatick Poesy he says:

It will not be easy to find a treatise ... so enlivened with imagery, so brightened with illustrations. (Dryden, IX, 387.)

On the other hand, one of the faults of Absalom and Achitophel is its lack of imagery:

The subject had likewise another inconvenience: it admitted little imagery or description; and a long poem of mere sentiments easily becomes tedious; though all the parts are forcible, and every line kindles new rapture, the reader if not relieved by the interposition of something that soothes the fancy, grows weary of admiration, and defers the rest. (Dryden, IX, 413.)

Hundreds of examples of his use of this concept of imagery as sensuous representation could be plucked from Johnson's critical writings. The implications of his constant preoccupation with this quality of literature, and his constant application of this concept as a tool for evaluating literature will be developed later. At this point it is enough to be fully aware that Johnson generally uses the term "imagery" to refer to the power of literature to evoke distinct mental re-creations or representations of specific sense impressions.

Although he is far more concerned with sight imagery than that of any of the other senses, he nevertheless does not fail to include evocations of other sense impressions as imagery. In his Life of Dryden he says: "From those sounds which we hear on small or on coarse occasions we do not easily receive strong impressions or delightful images." (IX, 395.) He refers again to images of sound in his Life of Gray: "Gray seems in his rapture to confound the images of spreading sound and running water." (XI, 374.) These

two examples clearly show that auditory impressions also count as imagery. Such clear references to other sense impressions as images have not been discovered, but there are statements implying that they are included. Speaking of Swift's Yahoos Johnson says: "... he that had formed those images had nothing filthy to learn." (Swift, XI, 46.) The filthiness of the Yahoo image is created not so much by sight as by taste and smell, making it probable that Johnson here is referring primarily to imagery of those senses. Again, when Imlac says: "the evil of any pleasure that Nekayah can image is not in the act itself ..." (Rasselas, Ch. XLVI), he is obviously referring to images to be derived from all the senses. Other examples could be cited, but it seems clear that, although Johnson does refer to representations of other sense impressions as images, most of his references are to visual imagery. This is natural since most poetic imagery is sight imagery.

It is important to understand one other aspect of Johnson's use of this particular term. The modern conception of imagery, as has been pointed out, involves two functions, that of evoking sensuous representations, and that of making comparisons. As can be seen from Johnson's statements quoted above, imagery, to him, involved only the former. When writing about imagery, he is not concerned with figures of speech or tropes; he is concerned only with the quality of the picture or sensory response that is

being evoked. He is very much aware of figurative language as we shall see, but instead of lumping these two functions of language together under one term he discusses them separately. Thus, when he wishes to investigate the comparative aspect of figurative language, he does so using such terms as: wit, conceit, metaphor, simile, similitude, trope, allegory, invention, fiction or epithet. When he wishes to investigate the sensory qualities of language, he does so under the term "image" or "imagery." Of course, some non-figurative language, such as pure description, has the power to evoke sense impressions, and his use of the same term in both cases does not put it into a different category from figurative language. However, far from creating a stumbling block to an attempt to re-construct Johnson's views in terms of the modern definition of imagery, his terminology is a stepping stone to a clearer understanding. Most modern essays about imagery deal either with its sensory aspect or its metaphorical, comparative aspect but not both at once. Thus when Spurgeon talks about Shakespeare's imagery, she in fact limits her discussion to only one of its aspects, that of its sensory qualities. Of course she includes the comparative aspect in her definition of imagery, but outside of using it thus to narrow down the material she is investigating she says no more about it. When Johnson investigates the sensory qualities of language as "imagery" he is inevitably dealing mostly

with figurative language, outside of which vivid sense impressions are rarely evoked, but like Spurgeon he is limiting himself for the moment to only one aspect of it. An example may perhaps make this clearer. He chooses two passages from Dryden on which to comment about the imagery:

What precious drops are these,
Which silently each other's tracks pursue,
Bright as young diamonds in their infant dew?

and

Resign your castle -
Enter, brave Sir; for, when you speak the word,
The gates shall open of their own accord;
The genius of the place its Lord shall meet,
And bow its towery forehead at your feet.

Concerning these two passages he says: "Of the images which the two following citations afford, the first is elegant, the second magnificent; whether either be just, let the reader judge." (Dryden, IX, 438.) Both of these passages are images in the modern sense, but when Johnson calls them "images" he is referring to their pictorial aspect only. Should he have wished to comment on the nature of the combination of the elements of the comparison he would have done so using other terms. The modern definition of imagery, which limits investigation of the sensory qualities of language to figurative language, is probably a more useful critical tool than Johnson's broader definition that includes description as well, but it in no way renders his statements about imagery irrelevant. They deal only with the sensory aspect of language but the same is true of most

modern essays on imagery. When what he says about imagery is supplemented by what he says about the comparative aspects of language we have a well-articulated, useful theory of imagery that anticipates most of the basic modern principles.

(2) Other Terms Used by Johnson to Discuss Imagery

So far we have discussed only those terms used by Johnson to discuss the sensory aspect of language. We have established the general meanings of Johnson's terminology in relation to modern terminology. Now that we know what Johnson means by "imagery," we are ready to investigate some of the other terms by which he refers to the comparative aspects of imagery.³

As previously mentioned, the comparative aspects of imagery are discussed under various terms, rather than under the term "imagery." It is important to be aware of what these terms are, and how they are used. One important group of terms, of course, denotes various figures of speech. He defines metaphor as:

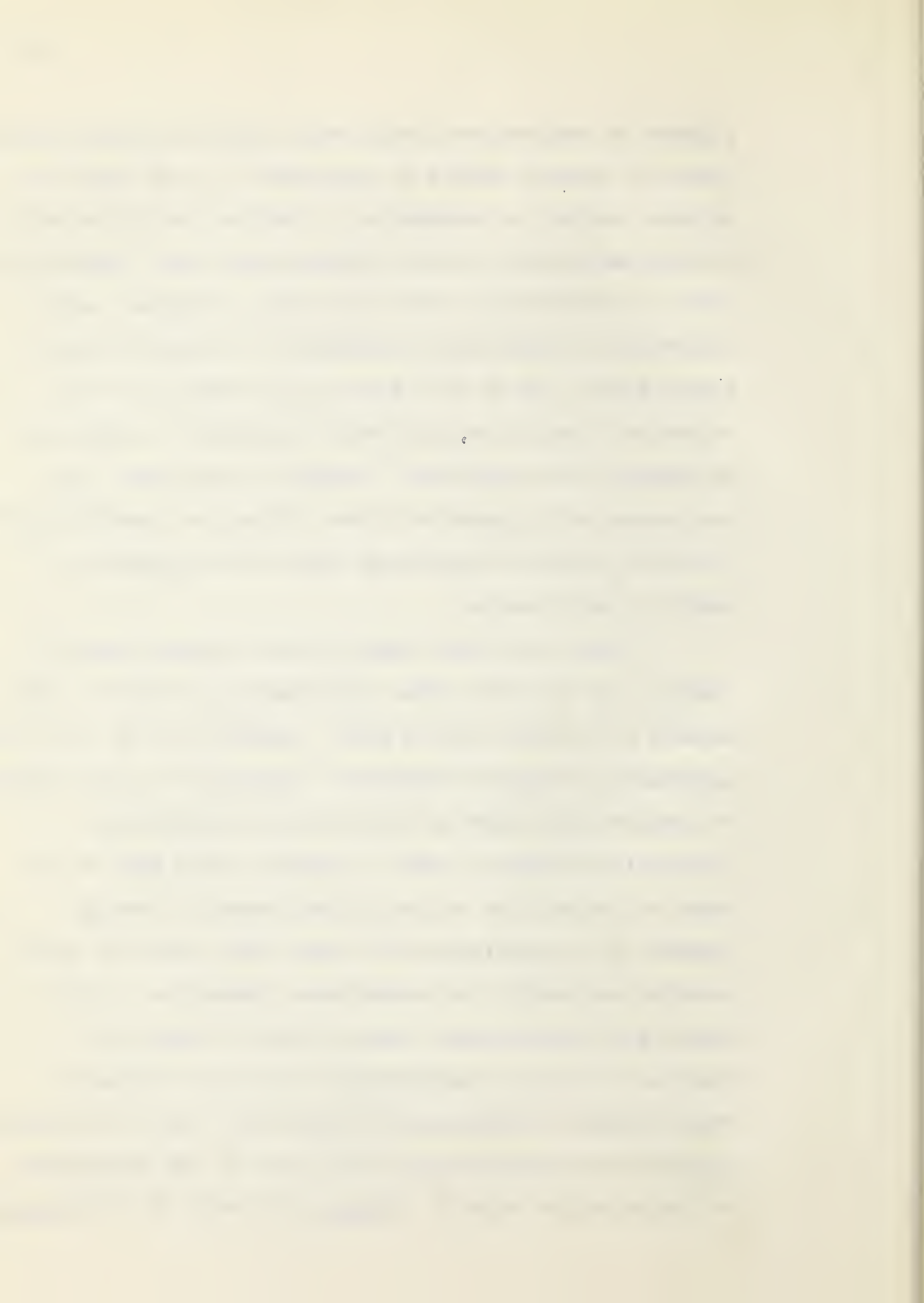
The application of a word to an use to which, in its original import, it cannot be put: as, he bridles his anger; he deadens the sound; the spring awakes the flowers. A metaphor is a simile comprized in a word; the spring putting in action the powers of vegetation, which were torpid in the winter, as the powers of a sleeping animal are excited by awaking him.
(Dictionary)

"Metaphorick" means "not literal; not according to the primitive meaning of the word; figurative." A trope, according to Johnson's definition, is much like a metaphor: "A change of a word from its original signification; as, the clouds foretel rain for foreshew." The quotation from Dryden, which he uses to illustrate his definition, shows

"trope" and "metaphor" to be nearly synonymous: "If this licence be included in a single word it admits of tropes; if in a sentence, of figures." Allegory, according to his dictionary, is extended metaphor: "a figurative discourse, in which something other is intended, than is contained in the words literally taken; as, wealth is the daughter of dilligence, and the parent of authority." A simile is "a comparison by which anything is illustrated or aggrandized." A synonym for simile is similitude, which is also a "comparison." This definition of a simile, which is really more of an explanation of the function of a simile than a definition, is the only one that includes anything but the comparative aspects of the figure. Other aspects such as the rendering of abstract qualities into concrete symbols or the immaterial into the material do not appear to be essential qualities of figurative language. That he recognized these as possible functions is indicated by a statement in the Lives where he says that to allegorize is "... to invest abstract ideas with form"⁴ To Johnson, however, a legitimate even though lesser function of figurative language was comparison of concrete with concrete or of abstract with abstract. He was like his age in wanting to use figurative language for all purposes of analogy. One function of the imagination was to bring together, by pointing out resemblances between, the various elements of nature, whether of general nature or external nature. The

figures he praises are always those which illustrate some aspect of general nature by comparing it to an aspect of external nature, or comparison of abstract with concrete, but his definitions do not differentiate, what moderns do tend to differentiate, from real poetic figures - mere descriptive comparisons of material or concrete things. Modern poets, led by T.S. Eliot in his search for the objective correlative, also better appreciate comparisons of abstract with concrete.⁵ Johnson, as we shall see, was always more pleased with the "objective correlative," but other kinds of comparisons were not considered unworthy of good poetry.

There are other terms by which Johnson refers to imagery, but they are terms that generally refer to other aspects of literary art as well. Probably one of the most important of these is "conceit." Generally the term bears the meaning indicated by his dictionary definition: "conception; thought; idea." However, since most of the ideas or conceptions in poetry are presented through imagery, it is inevitable that very often, what he calls conceits are really the comparisons themselves. Thus, speaking of metaphysical images, which he began the practice of calling "metaphysical conceits," he says: "these conceits Addison calls mixed wit; that is, wit which consists of thoughts true in one sense of the expression, and false in the other." (Cowley, IX, 45.) In his Life of



Dryden he quotes:

For by example most we sinned before,
And, glass-like, clearness mix'd with frailty bore.

He cites this image as an example of "~~other conceits~~ too curious to be quite omitted." (IX, 402.) Again, with reference to an involved image found in one of Dryden's poems he says it is "... a conceit so hopeless at the first view that few would have attempted it"

(Dryden, IX, 403.) In each of these comments "conceit" is virtually synonymous with "comparison," or "image."

The word "epithet" is also applied to comparisons. In the dictionary he defines it as: "an adjective denoting any quality, good or bad: as, the verdant grove, the craggy mountain's lofty head." His examples may serve to illustrate the fact that most adjectives are metaphorical to a degree, so that when Johnson talks about epithets in literature he very often is talking about metaphors or one-word images. Speaking of Cowley he says:

... His endeavors were rather to impress sentences upon the understanding than images on the fancy; he has few epithets, and those scattered without peculiar propriety or nice adaptation. (Cowley, IX, 65.)

In the Life of Gray he says "... an epithet or metaphor drawn from Nature ennobles Art; an epithet or metaphor drawn from Art degrades Nature." (XI, 374.) The epithets referred to in both these statements are images. "Invention," and a related term "fiction," are other words generally applied to broader aspects of literary creation,

but since the creation of tropes is one manifestation of the power of invention, when Johnson talks about invention he is often talking about imagery. Thus he says of Pope that "he had Invention by which new trains of events are formed and new scenes of imagery displayed, as in The Rape of the Lock, and by which extrinsick and adventitious embellishments and illustrations are connected with a known subject, as in the Essay on Criticism." (Life of Pope, XI, 193.) Invention is the general power of creation, but it is also manifested in the creation of imagery. In his Life of Waller he uses "Invention" in its broadest sense when he says that "the essence of poetry is Invention; such Invention as, by producing something unexpected surprises and delights." (IX, 275.) But he is referring specifically to imagery when in the Preface to Shakespeare he says:

The irregular combinations of fanciful invention may delight awhile ... but the pleasures of sudden wonder are soon exhausted, and the mind can only repose on the stability of truth.⁶

That he occasionally called images "fictions" is shown by his comment on one of Dryden's images: "How far he was yet from thinking it necessary to found his sentiments on nature, appears from the extravagance of his fictions and hyperboles." The "extravagant fictions" he is referring to are the following images:

The winds, that never moderation knew

Afraid to blow too much, too faintly blew;
Or, out of breath with joy, could not enlarge
Their straiten'd lungs. --

It is no longer motion cheats your view;
As you meet it, the land approacheth you;
The land returns, and in the white it wears
The marks of penitence, and sorrow bears.
(Dryden, IX, 402.)

Johnson makes some important pronouncements on imagery under all these terms, but his investigations into the nature of wit constitute his most fundamental ideas about imagery. "Wit" is one of the most frequently used words in eighteenth-century criticism, and an understanding of its various meanings is essential to an understanding of the literary principles of the period, as it is essential to an understanding of Johnson's literary principles and especially of his theory of imagery.

Among the meanings of the word current in Johnson's time was that it had borne in the previous century. According to faculty psychology, the two essential faculties of the human personality are the will and the wit. In this sense the term means "intellect". Thus, in his dictionary, Johnson's first definition is: "The powers of the mind; the mental faculties; the intellects. This is the original signification." However, by Dryden's time the word had come to be applied extensively to literature to signify certain aspects of poetry or of the poetic power. Dryden applies "wit" to the language of poetry; and Johnson accepts this application as a true one by quoting Dryden's

definition to illustrate one of his own dictionary meanings. "The definition of wit is only this: that it is a propriety of thoughts and words; or, in other terms, thoughts and words elegantly adapted to the subject." It was one of Johnson's basic critical principles that in literature "new things are made familiar and familiar things are made new." One way this can be done is by taking a familiar idea or sentiment and making it new by embellishing it or decorating it with figures of speech, with versification, with clever turns of phrase, or various other rhetorical devices. There are many statements in the Lives representing this view, similar to what he says of the famous passage on death in Congreve's Mourning Bride:

He who reads these lines enjoys for a moment the powers of a poet: he feels what he remembers to have felt before, but he feels it with great increase of sensibility; he recognizes a familiar image, but meets it again amplified and expanded, embellished with beauty, and enlarged with majesty. (Congreve, X, 197-8.)

He suggests the same idea when he praises invention in Pope's Essay on Criticism because "... extrinsick and adventitious embellishments and illustrations are connected with a known subject" (Pope, XI, 193.) This conception of wit is the one expressed by Pope in his famous couplet:

True wit is Nature to advantage dress'd,
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well express'd.

While recognizing this as one manifestation of wit, Johnson

refuses to accept it as a definition. He says of this couplet that "Pope's account of wit is undoubtedly erroneous: he depresses it below its natural dignity and reduces it from strength of thought to happiness of language." (Cowley, IX, 20.) The inadequacy of this definition lies in its narrowness. It accounts for only one of the basic functions of poetry, that of making familiar things new; and it suggests only one way of doing it; through language. The other function of poetry, that of making new things familiar, is not mentioned in this couplet, nor is the possibility that the newness and familiarity may lie in the ideas or in the juxtaposition of new and familiar ideas.⁷ Therefore Johnson proposes as "... a more noble and adequate conception [of] wit" something that defines literature in terms of the thought; something that takes into account total literary effect, and expresses a more general and basic conception of the nature of poetry. It is that "... which is at once natural and new, that which, though not obvious, is, upon its first production, acknowledged to be just; ... that which he that never found it wonders how he missed" Applying this definition to the metaphysical poets he says that:

To wit of this kind the metaphysical poets have seldom risen: Their thoughts are often new, but seldom natural; they are not obvious, but neither are they just; and the reader, far from wondering that he missed them, wonders more frequently by what perverseness of industry they were ever found.
(Cowley, IX, 20.)

Wit then, in literature, is manifest as new things are made familiar and familiar things are made new. This is brought about either by combining familiar elements in a new way or by combining familiar and unfamiliar elements. Whatever the elements, the combination must be at once natural and new, if it is to be true wit, and true poetry. Wit, according to this definition, is the very essence of poetry; the measure or estimate of the wit is a judgement of poetic merit. That the concept is one of Johnson's basic critical tools is demonstrated by the frequency and manner of its use. The metaphysicals are condemned by it because although they bring new elements together the combination does not seem natural and the new elements are not made familiar by it. They are new but not natural. On the other hand, by this tool, Johnson assesses Pope's Rape of the Lock to be one of the greatest of all ludicrous poems:

In this work are exhibited in a very high degree the two most engaging powers of an author: new things are made familiar and familiar things are made new. A race of aerial people never heard of before is presented to us in a manner so clear and easy, that the reader seeks for no further information, but immediately mingles with his new acquaintance, adopts their interests, and attends their pursuits, loves a sylph and detests a gnome.

That familiar things are made new every paragraph will prove. The subject of the poem is an event below the common incidents of common life; nothing real is introduced that is not seen so often as to be no longer regarded, yet the whole detail

of a female day is here brought before us invested with so much art of decoration that, though nothing is disguised, everything is striking, and we feel all the appetite of curiosity for that from which we have a thousand times turned fastidiously away. (Pope, XI, 180.)

In this pronouncement, as in the one on the metaphysicals, Johnson is thinking of wit as applied to all kinds of combinations of all kinds of elements. This definition is meant to be this broad. However, one kind of combination is that which constitutes an image, and truly poetic images also exemplify true wit. They must be at once natural and new, making new things familiar and familiar things new. Many critics previous to Johnson, following the lead of Hobbes, had thought of wit as the combining and associating power of the imagination, or the ability to perceive similarity in dissimilars as manifested in figurative language. Both Addison (in Spectator No. 62) and Johnson (in one dictionary definition of wit) quote this passage from Locke to define wit:

For Wit [lies] most in the Assemblage of Ideas, and [in] putting those together with Quickness and Variety, wherein can be found any Resemblance or Congruity, thereby to make up pleasant Pictures and Agreeable Visions in the Fancy [It is manifested in] Metaphor and Allusion: wherein, for the most Part lies that Entertainment and Pleasantry of Wit which strike so lively on the Fancy, and is therefore so acceptable to all people.⁸

Johnson obviously is thinking of image-making as a manifestation of true wit in The Fountains: A Fairy Tale.

Floretta drinks a magic potion which gives her the power of wit: "As she returned she felt new successions of imagery rise in her mind, and whatever her memory offered to her imagination assumed a new form, and connected itself with things to which it seemed before to have no relation."⁹ In Rambler 141 he complains of another use of the word than as a critical term for the image-making power.

A wit, Mr. Rambler, in the dialect of ladies, is not always a man, who, by the action of a vigorous fancy upon comprehensive knowledge, brings distant ideas unexpectedly together, who by some peculiar acuteness discovers resemblances in objects dissimilar to common eyes, or by mixing heterogeneous notions dazzles the attention with sudden scintillations of conceit. A lady's wit is a man who can make ladies laugh¹⁰

In speaking of the imagery typical of the metaphysical poets he says that

... their acuteness often surprises; if the imagination is not always gratified, at least the powers of reflection and comparison are employed; and in the mass of materials which ingenious absurdity had thrown together genuine wit and useful knowledge may be sometimes found buried
(Cowley, IX, 22.)

The distinguishing feature of true wit as manifested in images, as in all combinations, is that the comparison must be both natural and new. Although the resemblances or links between the two parts of the image must be previously unnoticed, they must be nevertheless so numerous that the comparison seems just and natural. Johnson realized that all comparisons are justified providing there is even one

link, but all comparisons are not equally just or natural. The fewer the links, the less natural the comparison. However, Johnson's critical principles were designed to take this fact into account. He had another concept of wit which described comparisons having few links or resemblances, and which therefore had much more of the quality of newness than of naturalness about them. This concept is first stated by Eumathes in Rambler 194 who defines wit as

the unexpected copulation of ideas, the discovery of some occult relation between images, in appearance remote from each other; an effusion of wit therefore, presupposes an accumulation of knowledge; a memory stored with notions, which the imagination may cull out to compose new assemblages.

The concept is applied often by Johnson as a critical tool, but the most famous example of its use is in relation to the metaphysical poets. After defining true wit and stating that "to wit of this kind the metaphysical poets have seldom risen," he suggests another more applicable definition - that of a lesser but nevertheless worthwhile variety:

But wit, abstracted from its effects upon the hearer, may be more rigorously and philosophically considered as a kind of discordia concors; a combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike. (Cowley, IX, 20.)

This kind of wit is inferior to true wit because it tends to sacrifice the natural for the sake of the new; the charm of familiarity for the delight occasioned by surprise.

However, as long as it does not carry this too far it still, in Johnson's opinion, embodies both essentials of poetic pleasure - the familiar and the new. The metaphysicals are condemned, not because they exhibit this kind of wit, but because they go too far:

Of wit, thus defined, they have more than enough. The most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together; nature and art are ransacked for illustrations, comparisons and allusions Their thoughts [viz. comparisons] are often new, but seldom natural; they are not obvious, but neither are they just; and the reader, far from wondering that he missed them, wonders more frequently by what perverseness of industry they were ever found. ... Their learning instructs and their subtilty surprises; but the reader commonly thinks his improvement dearly bought, and, though he sometimes admires is seldom pleased. (Cowley, IX, 20.)

Johnson is not here condemning this kind of wit as is often thought. He is condemning the abuse of it which completely destroys the balance between the "natural and the new."

The metaphysicals did not always go too far:

... Great labour, directed by great abilities, is never wholly lost; if they frequently threw away their wit on false conceits, they likewise sometimes struck out unexpected truth; if their conceits were far-fetched, they were often worth the carriage (Cowley, IX, 20.)

Occasionally, although not often as Johnson has made clear, they even rose to true wit:

... In the mass of materials which ingenious absurdity has thrown together, genuine wit and useful knowledge may be sometimes found buried (Cowley, IX, 22.)

While emphasizing the fact that Johnson accepted this latter kind of wit as a worthy component of poetry, condemning the metaphysicals only because they went too far, it is also important to understand that he considered it inferior to true wit. The distinction is not that between true wit and false wit, but that between true wit and less true wit. Nor is it really accurate to call the latter metaphysical wit, since, according to Johnson, the metaphysical poets did not really exemplify it. They abused it. Since the distinction between these two kinds of wit is a real and important one often used by Johnson as a tool for evaluating literature, let us refer to them during the subsequent discussion as primary (true) wit and secondary wit.

Whether referring to the sensory aspect of imagery by his own term "imagery," or to the comparative aspect as metaphor, trope, allegory, simile, conceit, epithet, invention, fiction, true wit, or secondary wit, Johnson never wrote very much about poetry without saying a great deal about imagery. The number and diversity of his terms and the frequency with which they appear are enough to demonstrate how important he considered this aspect of literature to be. That he thought deeply and fruitfully will become obvious as we now attempt to penetrate to the heart of the principles constituting Johnson's theory of imagery.

(3) The Comparative Aspects of Imagery

Johnson's investigations into the comparative aspects of language constitute his greatest contribution to modern theories of imagery. Nothing has been written that negates his principles, and surprisingly little new has been added to what he said, outside of the field of symbolism. This is not to say that he was not interested in the pictorial or evocative aspect of language. As we shall see, he believed that one of the main sources of poetic pleasure is sensual concreteness in language, and he had some profound notions about how this was to be best achieved. However, he was even more concerned with the nature of the elements of images and the manner of combining them that would produce the most delightful figurative language, and his ideas on the subject are still current.

One of his fundamental, and most often reiterated requirements for a comparison is that the elements should come from areas as divergent as possible without straining the comparison. This requirement is an extension of his basic principle that true wit is a combination of both the natural and the new. Only when the points of comparison are brought together from a distance is anything new created, and only when there is no sense of strain is it natural. The extent to which Johnson emphasizes the

necessity for both these qualities in all good comparisons, now one and now the other, constitutes a paradox, since the qualities are contradictory. This impression is strengthened by the fact that when Johnson is emphasizing novelty he seems to be completely forgetting about familiarity or naturalness, and when he demands naturalness, he usually seems to be censuring novelty. Thus, in criticizing Waller because he lacks novelty he says that "the essence of poetry is invention; such invention as, by producing something unexpected, surprises and delights." (Waller, IX, 275.) On the other hand, he criticizes Savage because he is often "... misled by an attempt after novelty to forced conceptions and far-fetched images." (Savage, X, 347.) And he sums up his criticism of typical metaphysical imagery by pointing out that "in all these examples it is apparent, that whatever is improper or vitious [sic] is produced by a voluntary deviation from nature in pursuit of something new and strange." (Cowley, IX, 39.) The explanation for this seeming contradiction lies of course in the fact that neither novelty nor familiarity separated from the other is pleasing. Only when the poet accomplishes their marriage through wit will they give birth to pleasure.

Johnson follows Addison in emphasizing the importance of the element of novelty or surprise in a comparison, and also in recognizing that this quality is achieved by bringing together elements as incongruous as possible. In

one of his fine essays on wit Addison suggests:

That every Resemblance of Ideas is not that which we call Wit, unless it be such an one that gives ... Surprise to the Reader In order therefore that the Resemblance in the Ideas be Wit, it is necessary that the Ideas should not lie too near one another in the Nature of things; for where the Likeness is obvious it gives no surprise. To compare one's Singing to that of another, or to represent the Whiteness of any Object by that of Milk or Snow, or the variety of its colours by those of the Rainbow, cannot be called Wit, unless besides this obvious resemblance, there be some further Congruity discovered in the two Ideas that is capable of giving the Reader some surprise. Thus when the Poet tells us, the bosom of his Mistress is as white as Snow, there is no Wit in the Comparison, but when he adds, with a Sigh, that it is as cold too, it then grows into Wit.¹¹

Johnson has taken over this concept, sharpened it into a critical tool, and used it very often as a means of determining the poetic merit of an image. He uses it to assess Dryden's "Eleonora:"

This piece, however, is not without its faults; there is so much likeness in the initial comparison that there is no illustration This is little better than to say in praise of a shrub that it is as green as a tree; or of a brook, that it waters a garden, as a river waters a country. (Dryden, IX, 418.)

It is important to notice here that one of the reasons for having an incongruity between tenor and vehicle that will make the comparison novel is that otherwise there is no illustration. He seems to recognize, ~~what is~~ ^{what is} often stressed by Wordsworth and Coleridge, that the way to help

someone grasp a concept, or image, is not to suggest analogy with a wholly similar concept or image, but with one that is "dissimilar in the main but with certain points of likeness distinguished."¹² Thereby, these specific points or aspects are emphasized and sharpened and impressed more vividly on the subject's mind, and he receives a much clearer impression or image of the whole. Johnson applies the same critical concept to one of Addison's images, at the same time clarifying the concept:

No passage in the "Campaign" has been more often mentioned than the simile of the angel, which is said in the Tatler to be "one of the noblest thoughts that ever entered into the heart of man," and is therefore worthy of attentive consideration. Let it first be enquired whether it be a simile. A poetical simile is the discovery of likeness between two actions, in their general nature dissimilar, or of causes terminating by different operations in some resemblance of effect. But the mention of another like consequence from a like cause, or of a like performance by a like agency, is not a simile, but an exemplification. It is not a simile to say that the Thames waters fields as the Po waters fields; or that as Hecla vomits flames in Iceland so Aetna vomits flames in Sicily. ...

A simile may be compared to lines converging at a point, and is more excellent as the lines approach from greater distance: an exemplification may be considered as two parallel lines, which run on together without approximation, never far separated, and never joined. ...

The lines on Marlborough are just and noble; but the simile gives almost the same images a second time. (Addison, X, 116-117.)

This concept provides one of his reasons for maintaining that Pope's simile comparing a student advancing in science

with a traveller passing the Alps, is "perhaps the best simile in our language." One reason he gives is that "the most exact resemblance is traced between things in appearance utterly unrelated to each other."¹³

Not all modern critics agree with Johnson that this incongruity between compared elements is essential.

W.P. Ker, for instance, has stated that:

No similes are more impressive than those of Dante where he does not change the ground, where he takes his similes from kindred matters, not going over into another species.¹⁴

However, this principle has become a law to most modern critics. For example, J. Middleton Murry, in an essay on metaphor that is well recognized by virtually every writer on figurative language since his time, has this to say about comparisons:

The essential is simply that there should be that intuitive perception of similarity between dissimilars What we primarily demand is that the similarity should be a true similarity and that it should have lain hitherto unperceived, or but rarely perceived by us, so that it comes to us with an effect of revelation: something hitherto unknown is suddenly made known. To that extent the imagery is truly creative: it marks an advance, for the writer who perceives and the reader who receives it, in the conquest of some reality.¹⁵

Murry is saying here what Coleridge taught the moderns to say in his writings on imagination. "This power, ... reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness with difference; ...

the sense of novelty and freshness with old and familiar objects"¹⁶ The elements of a comparison are "dissimilar in the main by some one point or more of likeness distinguished."¹⁷ They "have no connexion natural or moral, but are yoked together by the poet by means of some accidental coincidence."¹⁸ And Coleridge is saying here what Johnson may have taught him about wit:

That ... which is at once natural and new, that which, though not obvious, is, upon its first production acknowledged to be just ...; a kind of discordia concors; a combination of dissimilar images; or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike. (Cowley, IX, 20.)

This critical concept of Johnson explains his attitude toward the metaphysicals. He respects and admires them because they do achieve so brilliantly in their metaphors the quality of surprise or novelty. However, his admiration and appreciation are greatly qualified by the realization that they often fail to bring their disparate elements together in a way that is natural, familiar, and without a sense of strain.

This qualifying aspect of his first basic requirement of imagery is stressed by Johnson even more often than the other. Widely diverging or highly incongruous elements do not constitute a poetic comparison unless they are brought naturally together by demonstrated congruities. Failure to accomplish this is the reason for many unfavorable comments by Johnson. It explains most of his criticisms

of metaphysical imagery:

What they wanted ... of the sublime, they endeavoured to supply by hyperbole; their amplifications had no limits; they left not only reason but fancy behind them; and produced combinations of confused magnificence, that not only could not be credited, but could not be imagined. (Cowley, IX, 22.)

Their fictions were often violent and unnatural. (Cowley, IX, 130.)

Of thoughts so far-fetched as to be not only unexpected, but unnatural all their books are full. (Cowley, IX, 125.)

He finds many examples of "enormous and disgusting hyperboles ...," that lead him to suggest that "they looked not out for images but conceits." (Cowley, IX, 29 and 32.)

Their thoughts and expressions were sometimes grossly absurd and such as no figures or license can reconcile to the understanding. (Cowley, IX, 32.)

The metaphysicals are not the only ones criticized for this fault. Dryden is often castigated for "... the extravagance of his fictions and hyperboles." (Dryden, IX, 402.) His earlier works in particular show that he found it difficult to "... free his mind from the ambition of forced conceits." (Dryden, IX, 400.) He everywhere condemns comparisons which like the comparison of the Chancellor to the Indies in the verses to the Lord Chancellor Clarendon, "leave all resemblances too far behind" (Dryden, IX, 404.) He heaps scorn on the poems written by Dryden's enemies to lampoon his character because

"the whole animation of these compositions arises from a profusion of ludicrous and affected comparisons." (Dryden, IX, 361.) He finds many comparisons in Waller like the one in The War with Spain comparing "... the Spaniards drawing the English on, by saluting St. Lucas with cannon, to lambs awakening the lion by bleating," which he says is "... too far-fetched." (Waller, IX, 273.) One of his few criticisms of Milton's Comus is that "... the figures are too bold" (Milton, IX, 159.)

Such comments are liberally sprinkled throughout Johnson's criticism, and they demonstrate that one of his basic principles of imagery is the requirement that while comparisons must bring together incongruous elements, yet the combination must seem natural by virtue of the number of congruities linking them.

It seems to me that Johnson's two definitions of wit are, among other things, a summary of this basic principle into a formula that is a highly useful critical tool.

Johnson's definition of the highest kind of wit is:

That which is at once natural and new,
that which, though not obvious, is, upon
its first production, acknowledged to be
just; ... that which he that never found
it wonders how he missed

Comparisons exhibiting this kind of wit must maintain a perfect balance between the natural and the new. They are new because they combine elements that seemed so different that the comparison was never noticed before. They are

The first part of the paper is devoted to the study of the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) as $t \rightarrow \infty$. It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) are bounded and tend to zero as $t \rightarrow \infty$. The second part of the paper is devoted to the study of the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) as $t \rightarrow 0$. It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) are bounded and tend to zero as $t \rightarrow 0$. The third part of the paper is devoted to the study of the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) as $t \rightarrow \infty$. It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) are bounded and tend to zero as $t \rightarrow \infty$. The fourth part of the paper is devoted to the study of the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) as $t \rightarrow 0$. It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) are bounded and tend to zero as $t \rightarrow 0$. The fifth part of the paper is devoted to the study of the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) as $t \rightarrow \infty$. It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) are bounded and tend to zero as $t \rightarrow \infty$. The sixth part of the paper is devoted to the study of the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) as $t \rightarrow 0$. It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) are bounded and tend to zero as $t \rightarrow 0$. The seventh part of the paper is devoted to the study of the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) as $t \rightarrow \infty$. It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) are bounded and tend to zero as $t \rightarrow \infty$. The eighth part of the paper is devoted to the study of the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) as $t \rightarrow 0$. It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) are bounded and tend to zero as $t \rightarrow 0$. The ninth part of the paper is devoted to the study of the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) as $t \rightarrow \infty$. It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) are bounded and tend to zero as $t \rightarrow \infty$. The tenth part of the paper is devoted to the study of the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) as $t \rightarrow 0$. It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) are bounded and tend to zero as $t \rightarrow 0$.

natural because, once the comparison is made, the many links or similarities become obvious, binding the elements firmly together. This kind of wit produces the highest kind of poetic pleasure. However, not all comparisons establish such a perfect balance between the natural and the new. There is a kind of comparison that emphasizes the disparities between the elements and is satisfied with fewer or a minimum of comparative links. This kind of wit he defines as: "... a kind of 'discordia concors'; a combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike." This is a worthwhile poetic faculty or endeavour, unless like the metaphysical poets there is "more than enough" and "the most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together," or like them one has never "arisen" to wit of the higher kind. It is not the highest kind of wit because it sacrifices some of the natural for the sake of the pleasure of novelty. The pleasure it gives is inferior because one soon grows tired of it. This is the reason for Johnson's cool assessment of Butler's Hudibras:

If inexhaustible wit could give perpetual pleasure, no eye would ever leave half read the works of Butler; for what poet has ever brought so many remote images so happily together? It is scarcely possible to peruse a page without finding some association of images that was never found before. By the first paragraph the reader is amused, by the next he is delighted, and by a few more strained to astonishment; but astonishment is a toilsome pleasure; he is soon weary of

wondering and longs to be diverted.
(Butler, IX, 194.)

One of Johnson's critical principles then is the evaluation of the poetic merit of a comparison in terms of the number of similarities linking the elements. The more the links, the more the merit, and the higher the wit.

This principle did not die with Johnson. I believe that Coleridge expanded it, renamed it, and made it the basis of his distinction between fancy and imagination as applied to figurative language. One of the great modern Coleridge scholars, I.A. Richards, has established that one of the main applications of Coleridge's distinction between fancy and imagination is to assessing the merit of imagery. He suggests that the terms imply a difference in "... the number of connexions" between the parts of the comparison, and "the relations between those comparisons," or in other words "the interrelationship of the parts."¹⁹ If the interrelationship is slight, then the image is a fanciful one. If there are many connexions, then the image is imaginative. Representative of Coleridge's statements upon which Richards bases his conclusion are these describing the nature of a fanciful image: "the elements" are "dissimilar in the main by some one point or more of likeness distinguished;" and, they "have no connexion natural or moral, but are yoked together by the poet by means of some accidental coincidence."²⁰ It is interesting that Coleridge assigned to the metaphysical poets this lesser faculty. "Milton had a highly imaginative,

Cowley a very fanciful mind."²¹ Wordsworth applies the term "Fancy" in the same way:

The law under which the processes of Fancy are carried on is as capricious as the accidents of things, and the effects are surprising, playful, ludicrous, amusing, tender, or pathetic, as the objects happen to be oppositely produced or fortunately combined.... Fancy ... prides herself upon the curious subtilty and the successful elaboration with which she can detect their lurking affinities.²²

It is instructive to compare such statements with Johnson's definition of secondary wit which he also applied to the metaphysical poets. It is :

A kind of discordia concors; a combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike. The most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together; nature and art are ransacked for illustrations, comparisons and allusions; their ... subtilty surprises (Cowley, IX, 20.)²³

The same striking similarity of thought and even of terminology is found by comparing what Wordsworth and Coleridge have to say about imagination, with Johnson's definition of true wit. Coleridge says that imagination "reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness with difference; ... the sense of novelty and freshness with old and familiar objects."²⁴ In speaking specifically of an imaginative image from Shakespeare Coleridge says: "how many images and feelings are here brought together without effort and without discord"²⁵ Interpreting this

statement Richards suggests that "here, in contrast to the other case, the more the image is followed up, the more the links of relevance between the units are discovered."²⁶

Again Wordsworth is in full agreement:

When the Imagination frames a comparison,
if it does not strike on the first
presentation, a sense of the truth of the
likeness from the moment that it is per-
ceived, grows - and continues to grow -
upon the mind; the resemblance depending
less upon ... casual and outstanding, than
upon inherent and internal properties.

The combinations of imagination are "momentous" and the mind acknowledges their "justice and reasonableness."²⁷

Their concept of imagination embodies their highest estimation of poetic merit. Johnson, on the other hand, embodies his highest estimation of poetic merit in his "more noble and adequate conception" of wit. It is "that ... which is at once natural and new, that which, though not obvious, is, upon its first production acknowledged to be just, ... that which he that never found it wonders how he missed" (Cowley, IX, 20.)²⁸

This comparison of Johnson's distinction between primary and secondary wit to Wordsworth's and Coleridge's distinction between fancy and imagination is not designed to show plagiarism or lack of originality in Wordsworth and Coleridge. Their conception has a whole new philosophic basis: Johnson had nothing like Coleridge's concept of the mind as a self-realizing organic unit sharing in the divine essence, nor his ideas about the

imagination as an organic fusing power. It is intended to establish another link between the literary criticism of the eighteenth and the nineteenth century, and to help determine the significance of Johnson's contribution to modern theories of imagery. According to Richards, Coleridge's distinction between Imagination and Fancy is the "first step towards systematic comparisons between the structures of the meanings of poetry ... and, still more important, with it the way towards a further technique of comparison has been opened."²⁹ I will not question the importance suggested here of this concept to modern criticism. What I would question is Richards' implication that the concept is new with Coleridge. I believe I have demonstrated that the same concept was a basic principle of Samuel Johnson's system, clearly articulated in his distinction between primary and secondary wit, and used frequently and intelligently as a tool for evaluating poetic imagery. Therefore, surely much of the credit for this significant contribution to modern theories of imagery belongs to Samuel Johnson.

It seems that many of Johnson's critical principles involve a balance or reconciliation between antithetical or opposing qualities. This is certainly true of the principle we have been discussing, and it is also true of the second main principle of his theory of imagery. His criticism everywhere shows evidence of a great concern that imagery should satisfy both intellect and emotions. He indicates

this dual purpose of imagery most clearly in his definition of a simile: "a comparison by which any thing is illustrated or aggrandized." Again, he declares that:

A simile to be perfect, must both illustrate and ennoble the subject; must shew it to the understanding in a clearer view, and display it to the fancy with greater dignity, but either of these qualities may be sufficient to recommend it. (Pope, XI, 175.)

Similes can be good that appeal to either the intellect or the emotions, but to be perfect they must appeal to both.

What qualities, according to Johnson, make an image intellectually appealing? One of the most important is the clarity with which it illustrates an idea. This of course is an extension of his basic idea that in good imagery new things are made familiar. Johnson was interested in the versification and illustration of ideas. He felt that one of poetry's main functions is to make ideas more readily understandable, and its greatest tool for accomplishing this is the imagery. Imagery is not the matrix of poetic thought; it is the clothing. Its function is not to create ideas but to illustrate those that have already been stated; not to explore uncharted seas of thought but to add definition and clarity to ideas that have already been spelled out. Therefore an image must always be perfectly clear and its meaning able to be, and in fact is, rendered into a prose paraphrase. Thus he gives his highest praise to Pope's simile of the Alps because, among other

things, "it makes the foregoing position better understood, and enables it to take faster hold on the attention; it assists the apprehension" (Pope, XI, 176.) This of course differs greatly from the use the metaphysical poets made of images as the very core of the poem - the substance of the poem that alone directs its course and determines the direction of its meaning. It differs greatly from the romantic conception of an image as a symbol, a means of exploring reality, or an expression of something that cannot be expressed in any other way or stated in a prose paraphrase.

The essential quality, then, of an image is its clarity. This concept prompts a great many of Johnson's critical comments. It explains his criticism of Shakespeare's style:

The stile of Shakespeare was in itself ungrammatical, perplexed, obscure In narration he affects disproportionate pomp of diction He is not long soft and pathetic without some idle conceit.³⁰

This statement hearkens back to a similar one made by Dryden in his Preface to Troilus and Cressida, with which Johnson agrees:

... Yet I cannot deny that he [Shakespeare] has his failings; but they are not so much in the passions themselves as in his manner of expression: he often obscures his meaning by his words and sometimes makes it unintelligible 'Tis not that I would explode the use of Metaphors from passion, for Longinus thinks 'em necessary to raise it; but to use 'em at every word, to say nothing without a Metaphor, a Simile, an Image, or

description, is I doubt to smell a little too strongly of the Buskin.³¹

While it is undeniable that Shakespeare is often unnecessarily obscure, most modern poets would disagree with this statement. Modern poetry also attempts "to say nothing without a Metaphor, a Simile, an Image, or a description ..., " and no great pains are taken to do away with obscurity. Johnson's edition of Shakespeare, according to some experts, contains a number of emendations of metaphorical passages "replaced by rational, plain language" because they were too obscure. "In others it was simply stated that such an image was impossible."³² Johnson criticizes Akenside for lack of clarity when he states that "... the pedant surely intrudes ... when he tells how 'Planets absolve the stated round of Time'." (Akenside, XI, 316.) It also prompts him to label some of the metaphysical images "too scholastick" because they "drew their conceits from recesses of learning not very much frequented by common readers of poetry." (Cowley, IX, 24 and 25.) Over-subtlety and obscurity in one of Dryden's poems is also criticized:

In the verses to the Lord Chancellor Clarendon, is a conceit so hopeless at the first view, that few would have attempted it; and so successfully labored, that though at last it gives the reader more perplexity than pleasure, and seems hardly worth the study that it costs, yet it must be valued as a proof of a mind at once subtle and comprehensive. (Dryden, IX, 403.)

Many other similar applications of this principle appear in

Johnson's criticism.

Another related quality that an image must have to make it intellectually appealing to Johnson is that it must be literally true to nature on both sides of the comparison. When brought together the elements are metaphorical, but they must both originate in reality and be literally true when considered separately. Johnson always criticizes comparisons that are literal on one side and metaphorical on the other.

It is not easy to understand exactly what he means by this. He criticizes Denham's famous lines:

O could I flow like thee, and make thy stream
My great example as it is my theme!
Though deep, yet clear; though gentle, yet not dull;
Strong without rage, without o'er flowing full.

The lines are in themselves not perfect; for most of the words, thus artfully opposed, are to be understood simply on one side of the comparison, and metaphorically on the other; and if there be any language which does not express intellectual operations by material images, into that language they cannot be translated. (Denham, IX, 78.)

However, he does not find the same fault at all with Pope's simile:

Fir'd at first sight with what the Must imparts,
In fearless Youth we tempt the Heights of Arts,
While from the bounded Level of our Mind,
Short Views we take, nor see the Lengths behind,
But more advanc'd, behold with strange Surprise
New, distant scenes of endless Science rise!
So pleas'd at first, the towering Alps we try,
Mount o'er the Vales, and seem to tread the Sky;
Th' Eternal Snows appear already past,
And the first Clouds and Mountains seem the last:
But those attain'd, we tremble to survey

The growing Labours of the lengthen'd Way,
 Th' increasing Prospect tires our wandring Eyes,
 Hills peep o'er Hills, and Alps on Alps arise!

It is not entirely clear why not in this simile as well as in the other "the words thus artfully opposed, are to be understood simply on one side of the comparison and metaphorically on the other." In fact, this simile, like all figures of speech, ascribes qualities that are literally true of one thing to something else of which they are only metaphorically true. What then is the actual difference between these comparisons? The key lies in part of his comment on Denham's simile: "... and if there be any language which does not express intellectual operations by material images into that language they cannot be translated." The simile compares how the poet would like his verse to be, to the Thames River. His meaning is obvious because his sense is literal when he applies to the river such words as: "flow," "deep yet clear," "gentle yet not dull," "strong without rage," "without o'er flowing full." But when applied to the poet's verse what exactly do these words mean? Their metaphorical application here is emphasized because their meaning is somewhat obscure. In other words these material images do not express the intellectual operations accurately and plainly enough. They describe the river's operations using details that do not readily and clearly apply to the verse and do not make apparent the real characteristics of the verse. This side

of the comparison does not originate in reality. On the other hand, Pope's simile compares the process of gaining knowledge to the process of climbing the Alps. His meaning is obvious when he applies to the mountain climbing process such phrases as: "the towring Alps we try," "mount o'er the Vales," "seem to tread the Sky," "th' Eternal Snows appear already past," "the first Clouds and Mountains seem the last," "but those attained we tremble to survey the growing Labours of the lengthen'd Way," "th' increasing Prospect tires our wandring Eyes," "Hills peep o'er Hills," "Alps on Alps arise." However, in this case, the metaphorical application of these expressions to the process of gaining knowledge is equally clear - partly because Pope has carefully pre-explained the meaning of his terms and interpreted the simile, and partly because all the details mentioned apply just as naturally and clearly to the process of learning as they do to the mountain-climbing process. The metaphorical transfer occurs so readily and naturally that the words do not seem metaphorical. They illustrate accurately the essential nature of the learning process, and therefore this side of the comparison originates in reality. Of course, the difference is only a quantitative one, and in this case slight. Therefore Johnson's criticism of Denham's simile is not very severe. He merely says that "the lines in themselves are not perfect." However, he vigorously condemns an image in Gray's "The Progress of

Poesy" which he considers to be seriously at fault in this regard:

Now the rich stream of music winds along
Deep, majestic, smooth, and strong,
Thro' verdant vales, and Ceres' golden reign
Now rowling down the steep amain
Headlong, impetuous, see it pour;
The rocks, and nodding groves rebellow to the roar.

Of this image, Johnson says:

Gray seems in his rapture to confound the images of "spreading sound and running water." A "stream of musick" may be allowed; but where does "musick" however "smooth and strong" after having visited the "verdant vales" rowl "down the steep amain," so that "rocks and nodding groves rebellow to the roar?" If this be said of Musick, it is nonsense: if it be said of Water, it is nothing to the purpose. (Gray, XI, 374.)

This example makes more clear what Johnson means by this principle. The figure compares spreading sound to a stream of water. Applied to the river, such expressions are perfectly clear, but applied to the sound of music, they are so vague and indefinite that they draw attention to their metaphorical quality. Details that apply perfectly to the river do not clearly apply to the sound, or at least to any sound that might actually occur in nature. Therefore this side of the comparison does not originate in nature; it is metaphorical.

Johnson finds many comparisons that are offensive in this regard in the works of Cowley. After expressing his debt to Addison for first pointing this out he says:

Love is by Cowley, as by other poets,
expressed metaphorically by flame and fire;

and that which is true of real fire is said of love, or figurative fire, the same word in the same sentence retaining both significations. (Cowley, IX, 44-45.)

He then quotes some of the examples cited by Addison in his essay on mixed wit.³³

Thus, "observing the cold regard of his Mistress's eyes, and at the same time their power of producing love in him, he considers them as burning glasses made of ice. Finding himself able to live in the greatest extremities of love, he concludes the torrid zone to be habitable. Upon the dying of a tree on which he had cut his loves, he observes that his flames had burnt up and withered the tree." (Cowley, IX, 44-45.)

Johnson then explains exactly what he considers to be wrong with these conceits, and thereby makes more clear the principle we have been trying to isolate. "These conceits Addison calls mixed wit; that is, wit which consists in thoughts true in one sense of the expression, and false in the other."³⁴ His meaning is plain. In each case a comparison is made between the possible effects of heat and the effects of love. The effects described can be produced by heat or lack of it, but such effects ascribed to love have no literal meaning. This side of the comparison does not originate in reality; it is metaphorical only and does not represent the true nature of love.

Johnson usually applies this critical principle to imagery very perceptively, but occasionally his personal prejudices lead him to rather strange applications.

His notorious criticism of "Lycidas" is a mis-application of this principle. Johnson disliked all pastoral poems for the same reason. Comparisons are constantly made, explicitly or implicitly, between shepherds and the activities common to their existence, and ordinary people and the operations of general nature. Descriptions that are literally true of the pastoral life are only

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metaphorical when applied to general life. Such descriptions then do not produce or further a true understanding of nature. Therefore Johnson says:

In this poem there is no nature, for there is no truth Its form is that of a pastoral; easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting ...; its inherent improbability always forces dissatisfaction on the mind. ... We know that they [Milton and King] never drove a field, and that they had no flocks to batten; and although it be allowed that the representation may be allegorical, the true meaning is so uncertain and remote that it is never sought, because it cannot be known when it is found. (Milton, IX, 153-4.)

Both this principle and the requirement that an image must illustrate an idea with clarity and precision demonstrate that Johnson himself approached and expected other readers to approach imagery analytically. He expected it to be able to stand the strain of careful, rational analysis. A great part of its appeal came from the pleasurable awareness, growing out of a careful scrutiny and dissection, of the perfect balance between the naturalness and the novelty of the comparison. The pleasure derived from seeing familiar things in a new way combining with the delight of perceiving new things in a familiar light is an intellectual pleasure depending upon rational and careful analysis of the image. The more readily the mind can comprehend all the implications and the more literally true to nature the parts of the comparison, the greater the pleasure. Obscurity and exaggeration tend to destroy it. Johnson always weighed images

in the balance of logical, understandable, literal analysis, and criticized them to the degree that they were found wanting. Thus Addison's "Letter from Italy" has only one fault worth mentioning. It has one image that will not bear analysis:

There is ... one broken metaphor, of which notice may properly be taken:

Fir'd with that name-
I bridle in my struggling muse with pain,
That longs to launch into a nobler strain.

To bridle a goddess is no very delicate idea; but why must she be bridled? because she longs to launch; an act which was never hindered by a bridle: and whither will she launch? into a nobler strain. She is in the first line a horse, in the second a boat; and the care of the poet is to keep his horse or his boat from singing. (Addison, X, 114.)

Johnson's criticism is full of such analyses of imagery.

Modern criticism generally agrees with the idea prompting this kind of analysis, that imagery should be a means of exploring general nature or reality, but it disagrees as to the kind of imagery that best accomplishes this. Where Johnson, in accordance with his age's emphasis on the rational faculty, requires imagery to be logical, literal, and readily understandable, modern poetic imagery creates its own logic, is highly symbolic and is not at all worried by obscurity. Modern poetic imagery works by suggestion and does not invite the reader to analyze it. In fact it is usually so condensed that Johnson's kind of analysis is impossible. However, this is not true of prose imagery. Modern prose imagery tends to

perform the same function as Johnson required of imagery generally. Here the reader has more time and tendency to analyze each image, and consequently it must bear analysis and yield pleasure as a result of it. As Middleton Murry says:

Prose gives us time to bear upon the comparison, which if it be exact and revealing will stand the strain of our attention, and is better frankly exposed to the inquiry it must receive. And again the function of imagery in poetry differs perceptibly from the function of imagery in prose. In poetry metaphor is chiefly a means to excite in us a vague and heightened awareness of qualities we can best call spiritual. Exactness and precision are seldom sought, and if they are, are seldom valuable; and often where an apparent exactness exists, as in the Homeric simile it is an incidental exactness and does not reinforce the point of specific analogy. ... The imagery of poetry is in the main complex and suggestive; the imagery of prose is single and explicit.³⁵

It seems obvious then that Johnson's ideas about what makes imagery intellectually appealing have been partially superseded by modern ideas about poetic imagery, but are still applicable to prose imagery and they provide a useful approach for its criticism. To Johnson they provided a useful approach to criticism of poetic imagery, although they did occasionally have the effect of limiting the range of imagery that he could enjoy by overemphasizing literalness.

This emphasis upon the intellectual requirements of imagery must not be allowed to deceive us into thinking that this is all Johnson required of imagery, or that his theory is prosaic. Part of Johnson's achievement according

to W.J. Bate was to outdistance the thinking of his age by seeing the necessity for a balance between intellectual and emotional qualities in poetry.

Far from being "prosaic," as nineteenth-century writers charged, Johnson's desire is only for an analytic potentiality of image or metaphor that will bear the test of intellect Throughout his writing Johnson implicitly assumes that analytic or abstract ingenuity, apart from human feelings and general aspirations, is never the sole aim of poetry.³⁶

That belief in the importance of emotion in poetry was contrary to prevailing trends of opinion in the eighteenth century is a generally accepted idea.³⁷ That Johnson did emphasize the emotional, as well as the intellectual qualities of poetry is not so obvious or so generally understood. There can be no doubt that he required both qualities in imagery. There is a tendency to forget his declaration that:

A simile to be perfect, must both illustrate and ennoble the subject; must shew it to the understanding in a clearer view, and display it to the fancy with greater dignity (Pope, XI, 175.)

There are many other critical comments in which Johnson stresses the necessity for emotional quality in imagery. In explaining general faults in imagery he says:

In their similes the greatest writers have sometimes failed; the ship race compared with the chariot race is neither illustrated nor aggrandized When Apollo, running after Daphne, is likened to a greyhound chasing a hare, there is nothing gained A god and the daughter of a god are not represented much to their advantage by a hare and a dog. (Pope, XI, 176.)

He suggests that the emotional quality of imagery should be dictated by the purpose for which the poetry was written.

In didactic poetry, of which the great purpose is instruction, a simile may be praised which illustrates though it does not ennoble; in heroicks, that may be admitted which ennobles, though it does not illustrate. (Pope, XI, 176.)

Apparently this latter half of the statement applies to more than just heroic poetry, for Johnson often praises images that are emotionally stirring even though not intellectually satisfying. In Dryden's "Verses to the Lord Chancellor Clarendon" he points out that:

There is another comparison, for there is little else in the poem, of which, though perhaps it cannot be explained into plain prosaick meaning, the mind perceives enough to be delighted, and readily forgives its obscurity, for its magnificence. (Dryden, IX, 404.)

One of his reasons for disliking metaphysical poetry is that "their conceits do not elevate the subject." (Cowley, IX, 32.) They violate the basic principle that to be complete a simile "... is required to exhibit, independently of its references, a pleasing image" (Pope, XI, 176.) In his criticism of Dryden's Annus Mirabilis he shows his concern that the emotions aroused by an image should be suitable to the subject:

The Husband and the Lover, though of more dignity than the castor, are images too domestic to mingle properly with the horrors of war. (Dryden, IX, 408.)

In creating the general literary "character" of Dryden he

points out this fault:

... Sentences were readier at his call than images; he could more easily fill the ear with splendid novelty, than awaken those ideas that slumber in the heart. (Dryden, IX, 435.)

While it is true that most of these statements refer to heroic similes and that the emotional quality they call for is a stylized, depersonalized one, yet nevertheless, coupled with the statements quoted that refer to other emotional qualities, they and dozens of other such statements show that Johnson did require imagery to have some emotional quality and the right emotional quality. He tempered his demands for the intellectual and rational with an equal insistence upon the emotional. He also understood that this quality is exactly proportional to the sensory concreteness of the image, but discussion of this takes us into a new aspect of Johnson's theory of imagery.

(4) The Sensory Aspects of Imagery

So far we have dealt mainly with Johnson's critical opinions on the comparative aspects of imagery. We are now ready to investigate his views on the sensory qualities. One of the more striking aspects of Johnson's theory of imagery is his concern with its power of evoking vivid sense impressions in the imagination. All the talk about "Johnson's distrust of the imagination," and of his insistence upon the didactic function of poetry, has tended to obscure this third basic principle in his theory of imagery. No other critic before the twentieth century shows so much concern with imagery, and few demonstrate a greater craving for imagery that will evoke a direct concrete sense impression in the mind. Johnson often repeats and applies as a critical precept the idea that "one of the great sources of poetical delight is description, or the power of presenting pictures to the mind." (Cowley, IX, 56.) One of his requirements for a perfect simile is that it must "exhibit, independently of its references, a pleasing image." (Pope, XI, 176.) Accordingly, one of his reasons for praising Pope's simile of the Alps so highly is that it "affords a striking picture by itself." (Pope, XI, 176.) Failure to do this is one of the greatest weaknesses of Cowley's poetry:

Cowley gives inferences instead of images, and shews not what may be supposed to have been seen, but what thoughts the sight might have suggested. (Cowley, IX, 56.)

He illustrates this fact by comparing a concrete image by Virgil to Cowley's general description of the stone with which Cain slew his brother:

I saw him fling the stone, as if he meant
At once his murder and his monument.
(Cowley, IX, 56.)

Later he compares him unfavorably to Tasso because:

Tasso affords images and Cowley sentiments.
... [Cowley wrote] with much thought and
little imagery. ... His endeavors were
rather to impress sentences upon the under-
standing, than images on the fancy
(Cowley, IX, 61, 65.)

He criticizes Dryden generally for the same reason:

The general fault [of "Annus Mirabilis"] is,
that he affords more sentiment than descrip-
tion, and does not so much impress scenes
upon the fancy, as deduce consequences and
make comparisons. (Dryden, IX, 406.)

Elsewhere he applies this principle to Savage's "On Publick Spirit, with regard to Publick Works." He justifies public disinterest in the poem because:

... Though it cannot be denied to contain
many striking sentiments, majestick lines,
and just observations, it is in general
not sufficiently ... enlivened in the
imagery (Savage, X, 361.)

The frequency with which Johnson applies this principle in his criticism attests to the strength of his craving for that in poetry which will evoke concrete sense impressions in the mind.

This craving is probably one reason why he preferred images that illustrate the abstract or subjective by comparison with the concrete or objective much more than

illustrations of abstract by abstract or concrete by abstract.³⁸ Thus he criticizes comparisons involving mythology or ancient tradition:

An epithet or metaphor drawn from Nature
ennobles Art: an epithet or metaphor
drawn from Art degrades Nature. (Gray, XI, 374.)

He often reiterates this idea.

He that courts his mistress with Roman
Imagery deserves to lose her Hammond
has few sentiments drawn from nature, and
few images from modern life. He produces
nothing but frigid pedantry. (Hammond, X, 276.)

Another reason for this preference of comparisons of abstract with concrete stems from his view of the essential character of poetry. Johnson, in harmony with his age, had two^{main} conceptions of nature: particular nature - the external, sensory features of environment; and general nature, or essential nature - the internal laws and principles that govern all of this world's phenomena. Johnson believed that poetry should embody both kinds of nature in a special kind of relationship. Particular nature should serve the purpose of illustrating or adorning general nature. A lack or surfeit of either kind of nature, or an improper relationship is a serious fault in a poem. Jean Hagstrum has succinctly summed up the role played by these two concepts of nature in Johnson's criticism:

There are in Johnson's criticism then, two large conceptions of nature, each of which may at various places and under various conditions receive primary emphasis but

both of which are usually operative
Nature as particular reality carries with it
no principle of universal value or formal
organization. But it is instructive in that
it is sober and unfauciful and keeps one's
feet firmly planted on the ground; and it is
of aesthetic value in that it provides
touches of liveliness and vivacity without
which literary art remains dull and un-
attractive. Nature as ordered reality
introduces universal psychological truth,
the uniform and unchanging constitution of
man's mind and emotions, and also those
radically simple but fundamental moral
truths which must provide the subject
matter of all permanent literary art.³⁹

Johnson judged Shakespeare to be the greatest poet because
more than any other he was "the poet of nature" - both
general and particular. After pointing out that "nothing
can please many, and please long, but just representations
of general nature," he goes on to say:

Shakespeare is above all writers, at least
above all modern writers, the poet of
nature; the poet that holds up to his
readers a faithful mirrour of manners and
of life. His characters are ... the
genuine progeny of common humanity, such as
the world will always supply, and observa-
tion will always find. His persons act and
speak by the influence of those general
passions and principles by which all minds
are agitated, and the whole system of life
is continued in motion. In the writings of
other poets a character is too often an
individual; in those of Shakespeare it is
commonly a species.⁴⁰

At the same time his plays represent particular nature.
They are "compositions exhibiting the real state of sublunary
nature."⁴¹

There is a vigilance of observation and
accuracy of distinction which books and

precepts cannot confer; from this almost all original and native excellence proceeds. Shakespeare must have looked upon mankind with perspicacity, in the highest degree curious and attentive. Other writers borrow their characters from preceding writers, and diversify them only by the accidental appendages of present manners; the dress is a little varied, but the body is the same. Our author had both matter and form to provide; for except the characters of Chaucer, there were no writers in English, and perhaps not many in other modern languages, which shewed life in its native colours.⁴²

Nor was his attention confined to the action of men; he was an exact surveyor of the inanimate world; his descriptions have always some peculiarities, gathered by contemplating things as they really exist. ... Shakespeare, whether life or nature be his subject, shows plainly that he has seen with his own eyes
....⁴³

The reason Johnson crowns Shakespeare the king of poets is that his poetry contains the most profound and comprehensive analysis of general nature, enlivened, illustrated and enforced with the most vivid and evocative particulars of external nature, or in other words with imagery. Given this as the true essential character of poetry, it follows that comparisons that illustrate the abstract by the concrete really constitute the essence of poetry. Johnson, no less than T.S. Eliot, was interested in the "objective correlative."

Just how concrete did Johnson want his imagery to be? Because his comments about generalized description have caused many scholars to forget about his equal insistence upon accurate representation of particular nature,

perhaps a corrective should be administered. Probably Wordsworth helped to create the misconception through his oft-quoted remark that poetry between Paradise Lost and the Seasons

does not contain a single new image of external nature; and scarcely presents a familiar one from which it can be inferred that the eye of a Poet had been steadily fixed upon his object.⁴⁴

If this were true of the poetry, it could only mean that poets were not following the critical principles of Samuel Johnson. He knew that imagery could not be effective unless it was accurate and rich in particulars. Thus, as Imlac tells how he tried to become an ideal poet, he says:

All the appearances of nature I was therefore careful to study I ranged mountains and deserts for images and resemblances and pictured upon my mind every tree of the forest and flower of the valley. I observed with equal care the crags of the rocks and the pinnacles of the palace. Sometimes I wandered along the mazes of the rivulet, and sometimes watched the changes of the summer clouds. To a poet nothing can be useless. Whatever is beautiful, and whatever is dreadful, must be familiar to his imagination: he must be conversant with all that is awfully vast or elegantly little. The plants of the garden, the animals of the wood, the minerals of the earth, the meteors of the sky, must all concur to store his mind with inexhaustible variety. (Rasselas, Ch. 10.)

Johnson praised Shakespeare for being an "exact surveyor of the inanimate world" and because "whether life or nature be his subject, [he] shows plainly that he has seen with his own eyes."⁴⁵ He applauds Thomson because:

He looks round on Nature and on Life with

the eye which Nature bestows only on a poet; the eye that distinguishes, in every thing presented to its view, whatever there is on which imagination can delight to be detained, and with a mind that at once comprehends the vast, and attends to the minute. The reader of the "Seasons" wonders that he never saw before what Thomson shews him (Thomson, XI, 235.)

On the other hand he criticizes Milton because:

His images and descriptions of the scenes or operations of nature do not seem to be always copied from original form, nor to have the freshness, raciness, and energy of immediate observation. He saw Nature, as Dryden expresses it, through the spectacles of books. (Milton, IX, 168.)

All this would be plain enough, were it not for a seemingly contradictory idea that often crops up in his criticism:

The business of a poet, [says Imlac,] is to examine, not the individual, but the species; to remark the general properties and large appearances: he does not number the streaks of the tulip, or describe the different shades in the verdure of the forest. He is to exhibit in his portraits of nature such prominent and striking features, as recal the original to every mind, and must neglect the minuter discriminations. (Rasselas, Ch. 10.)

That this statement appears in the same chapter of Rasselas as one of his strongest affirmations of the importance of the "minuter discriminations" suggests that he is not merely contradicting himself. We find him expressing the same idea again in his Life of Cowley. Concerning one specimen of Cowley's imagery he says:

What might in general expressions be great and forcible, he weakens and makes ridiculous by branching it into small parts. (Cowley, IX, 58.)

Again he says:

The fault of Cowley, and perhaps of all the writers of the metaphysical race, is that ... of pursuing his thoughts to the last ramifications, by which he loses the grandeur of generality; for of the greatest things the parts are little: what is little can be but pretty, and by claiming dignity becomes ridiculous. Thus all the power of description is destroyed by a scrupulous enumeration, and the force of metaphors is lost, when the mind by the mention of particulars is turned more upon the original than the secondary sense, more upon that from which the illustration is drawn than that to which it is applied. (Cowley, IX, 49.)

The reason there seems to be contradiction between Johnson's insistence on one hand upon particularity, and on the other hand upon generality, is that he is advocating a balance between them. Sometimes he stresses the one while implicitly accepting the need for the tempering effect of the other, and sometimes vice-versa. There are three reasons why this balance should exist, suggested in the above quotations. First, poetry must have the vividness that only comes from particularity, but Johnson, in common with his age enjoyed and demanded the grand style, and grandeur is destroyed by too much elaboration of particulars. Too much enumeration of details fastens the attention wholly upon them, and the nobler effects that can only be achieved by presenting a harmonious total impression are lost. As Johnson says:

[It] loses the grandeur of generality; for of the greatest things the parts are little, and what is little can be but pretty, and by claiming dignity becomes ridiculous.

Therefore Cowley "weakens and makes ridiculous" what might "in general expression be great and forcible" because he "branches it into small parts." He gives one example of Cowley doing this:

That Gabriel was invested with the softest or brightest colors of the sky, we might have been told, and been dismissed to improve the idea in our own different proportions of conception; but Cowley could not let us go till he had related where Gabriel got first his skin, and then his mantle, and then his scarfe, and related it in terms of the mercer and tailor. (Cowley, IX, 58.)

What Johnson is concerned with here, is the emotional quality of the image. He obviously recognizes and applies a principle that has been greatly emphasized in modern criticism, that the emotional quality of imagery is partially determined by its degree of particularity. Modern poets do not usually strive for the grand style, and so they require a greater degree of particularity than Johnson might have appreciated. However, he deserves a great deal of credit for being fully aware of its effect and its role in producing the grand emotions that he loved.

The second reason why Johnson tempers his insistence upon particularity in imagery has to do with the purpose of imagery. As previously suggested, he believed that particular nature in poetry has the function of illustrating general nature. He liked comparisons that illustrate the abstract by the concrete best. Too much detail in the image perverts this function. As he says above:

The force of metaphors is lost, when the mind by mention of particulars is turned more upon the original than the secondary sense, more upon that from which the illustration is drawn than that to which it is applied. (Cowley, IX, 49.)

Johnson, no less than Wordsworth, believed that particulars should not exist in poetry for their own sakes, but for the sake of the general truth that they are meant to convey.

Thus Imlac says that the purpose of the imagery that the poet acquires is

for the inforcement or decoration of moral or religious truth; and he, who knows most, will have most power of diversifying his scenes, and of gratifying his reader with remote allusions and unexpected instruction. (Rasselas, Ch. 10.)

The choice of detail is governed not only by the desire to present a vivid impression, but also by its degree of applicability and hence its power of illustrating the truth to be conveyed. A perfect simile, says Johnson, "has no useless parts, yet affords a striking picture by itself"

Details that improve the picture without being applicable to the general truth are "useless parts." The desire of antiquity to exhibit pleasing images, he points out, sometimes led the ancients to add

circumstances ... which having no parallels served only to fill the imaginations, and produced what Perrault ludicrously called "comparisons with a long tail." (Pope, XI, 176.)

Imagery of this type is at best superfluous - a mistaking of the means for the end; at worst it is a perversion of the noble role of poetry - it serves the purpose of obscuring

general nature by directing attention away from it to particular nature rather than vice-versa. Johnson wanted imagery to be as vivid, concrete and sensuous as it could possibly be without ceasing to be the servant of truth - as too much particularity was always in danger of doing. Johnson here again is not too far removed from the modern conception of the function of imagery, and perhaps he contributed to it. Murry says that its

highest function [is] to define indefinable spiritual qualities. All metaphor and simile can be described as the analogy by which the human mind explores the universe of quality and charts the non-measurable world. Of these indefinable qualities some are capable of direct sensuous apprehension, while others can be grasped only by a faculty which, though obviously akin to sensuous apprehension, yet differs from it. ... To the great poet his constant accumulation of vivid sense perceptions supplies the most potent means by which he articulates his spiritual intuitions, for recognition of spiritual quality can be most forcefully and swiftly conveyed through analogous recognitions of sensuous quality.⁴⁶

Lascelles Abercrombie adds to this his opinion of the purpose of imagery:

It is to enhance our sense of the significance of the things we are to imagine; that is, to enrich our consciousness of them.⁴⁷

And Rosamond Tuve agrees with Johnson's principle that the nature of the image should be moulded by the nature of the truth it is conveying when she says that the artist must have the capacity

... to select images on grounds of their

appropriateness. Images so selected must be significant; they will generally be consistent, apt, particular, but not local or singular.⁴⁸

Johnson's third reason for wanting poetry to "remark general properties and large appearance" rather than "number the streaks of the tulip or describe the different shades in the verdure of the forest" shows a deep understanding of the psychology of perception, and of principles governing imaginative reconstructions of sense perceptions. He understood that "all the power of description is destroyed by a scrupulous enumeration." (Cowley, IX, 49.) It seems likely that what he has in mind is the fact that when we perceive anything through the sense, we perceive only certain details that are particularly striking because they impress themselves most forcibly upon the senses. Our impression of any sense stimulation is really composed of a selection of particularly significant details that suggest the whole. Many details are unnoticed and hence unimportant. An imaginative reconstruction of that particular sense impression will include only these significant details. To evoke the complete image in the mind of a reader, a poet must stress the significant details only. To do more is to turn the mind upon the details themselves thereby failing to evoke a complete image. "The power of description is destroyed by a scrupulous enumeration." The tenth chapter of Rasselas contains his clearest expression of this principle. After

giving a careful enumeration of the variety of particulars and the details that he has carefully observed in preparing to become a poet, Imlac immediately seems to contradict himself by saying:

The business of a poet is to examine not the individual but the species; to remark general properties and large appearances: he does not number the streaks of the tulip, or describe the different shades in the verdure of the forest.

Then he adds a statement that shows that this seeming contradiction is a qualification of the previous statement because he recognizes the importance of only including significant details:

He is to exhibit in his portraits of nature such prominent and striking features, as recal the original to every mind, and must neglect the minuter discriminations

As a matter of fact then, this third reason for maintaining a balance in imagery between particularity and generality stems directly from Johnson's desire that imagery should be as concrete and vivid as possible, and it suggests an important technique for achieving it. The great satirical portraits or "characters" produced during the Restoration and eighteenth century show that the period generally understood the value of the significant detail in characterization. The search for the significant detail in poetic imagery is still continuing. Whatever progress has been made in finding it owes something to Samuel Johnson's pointing out that the best interests of vivid imagery are not served by indiscriminate use of detail.

(5) The Significance of Johnson's Theory

This desire then that imagery should be as sensory and concrete as possible, his concern with maintaining a balance between particularity and generality, and the principles involved in his three reasons for maintaining this balance, constitute Johnson's general principles on the sensory aspects of imagery. These, together with his views on the comparative aspects, constitute a well-rounded, useful, and usually perceptively applied theory of imagery that is an important part of his literary criticism, and of his great contribution to modern literary criticism. His idea that the elements of a comparison should come from divergent areas is still considered important and is often reiterated in modern discussions of imagery. His qualification that there must be sufficient links of comparison to make it seem natural and his system of evaluating a comparison by its naturalness reappear in expanded form in Coleridge's criticism and thereby have become important tools in modern literary criticism. His requirement that imagery satisfy both intellect and emotions is still accepted theory though his opinions about what qualities of imagery are intellectually satisfying are not. He clearly understood the relation between the emotional and the sensory qualities of imagery - qualitative as well as quantitative - a fundamental modern concept. His preference for imagery that serves as the "objective correlative," his

recognition of the importance of vivid, sensory concreteness, and his understanding of the role of significant detail in achieving it, are all important modern concepts. His theory of imagery anticipates many of the most fundamental and useful principles of modern theories of imagery.

However, current views on imagery have taken some directions that are foreign to Johnson's theory. He tended to think of imagery as decoration for the essential matter of poetry, while modern criticism generally regards the imagery itself as the essential matter. C. Day Lewis expresses a typical modern attitude when he says that:

... The image is the constant in all poetry, and every poem is itself an image. Trends come and go, diction alters, metrical fashions change, even the elemental subject matter may change almost out of recognition: but metaphor remains, the life-principle of poetry, the poet's chief test and glory.⁴⁹

And J.L. Lowes speaks of "the inevitability of imagery - an inevitability rooted and grounded deeply in the nature of the poet's medium, language"⁵⁰ On the other hand, typical of Johnson's age is his idea that imagery "... is useful for the enforcement of moral or religious truth" (Rasselas, Ch. 10.) He has the highest praise for Milton's Comus because "... allusions, images, and descriptive epithets, embellish almost every period with lavish decoration." (Milton, IX, 157-8.) Johnson's view of poetry maintains a distinct cleavage between the matter and the manner of poetry - the matter being the essence and the

manner, including the imagery, being the way it is stated and decorated. Modern criticism maintains that matter and manner are one; that imagery must be functional. Thus Cleanth Brooks declares that "... the imagery of a good poem must be 'functional' - it cannot afford to be merely decorative."⁵¹ However, there are still those who maintain that there is an important critical distinction between manner and matter, and who value the decorative image as well as the functional one. It has already been pointed out that Johnson's requirement that imagery be precisely and clearly illustrative has been generally superseded by the requirement that it should work by suggestion and explore realities that are otherwise unstatable. However, good imagery used for illustration is still appreciated by some as a legitimate ingredient of poetry. Another modern development is the concern with image patterns and with developing themes on the basis of these patterns. Thus Murry says that:

The greatest mastery of imagery does not lie in the use, however beautiful and revealing of isolated images, but in the harmonious total impression produced by a series of subtly related images.⁵²

And Day-Lewis is typically modern when he says:

Always in some sense, if the poem is to be a whole and not a series of stabbing, meaningless flashes, a pattern of imagery must be created, a relationship equivalent to that which underlies all reality living or inanimate.⁵³

Now, although Bate has demonstrated the existence of patterns

of imagery in Johnson's major poems Johnson did not consciously organize them as such independent of literal meaning.⁵⁴ Hagstrum seems to be right when he says that:

... In his critical practice there is no search of literary texts for recurring images or metaphorical habits that might reveal symbolic meanings. Johnson usually looked at one figure at a time in its immediate context. If he discovered patterns of imagery, he remained silent about them.⁵⁵

The nearest he came was to classify mentally the areas from which images were drawn into such categories as "domestick," "religious," "physiological," and "scientific."⁵⁶ One other direction taken by modern critics of imagery he did not take. He did not attempt to psychoanalyze poets or reconstruct their environment on the basis of recurring images. What he would have thought of this practice is made clear in an anecdote he relates in his Life of Thomson:

Savage, who lived much with Thomson, once told men, he heard a lady remarking that she could gather from his works three parts of his character, that he was a "great Lover, a great Swimmer, and rigorously abstinent;" but, said Savage, he knows not any love but that of sex; he was perhaps never in cold water in his life; and he indulges himself in all the luxury that comes within his reach. (Thomson, XI, 234.)

However, this practice is highly suspect and has been vigorously criticized by many modern critics.⁵⁷ However much Johnson did not say about imagery - and surprisingly little really new has been added - it seems clear that what he did say about it is profound, extensive, and still very important.

PART II - JOHNSON'S PRACTICE OF IMAGERY
IN THE LIVES OF THE POETS

(1) The Sources of the Imagery

There are several possible general approaches to investigating a writer's use of imagery. Some scholars note the ideas or themes that impel a poet to use images. Some notice what images a writer usually associates with what themes or ideas. However, the most popular and probably the most useful approach is to investigate the general areas from which a writer draws his images, thereby isolating image patterns or recurring kinds of images. This kind of information can be helpful in various ways. It is an aid in responding to a writer's style to be familiar with the kinds of images he most frequently uses. Furthermore, by being analyzed and isolated, this important element of a writer's art becomes more familiar and more readily accessible not only to students of his work but also to other aspiring writers. Again, many modern critics maintain that the key to poetic meaning, structure, and effect lies in the image patterns of a writer's work. Since Spurgeon discovered that many of Shakespeare's plays have characteristic image motifs, such as recurring images of disease, sickness, and corruption in Hamlet, critics commonly look for thematic imagery in literature. Another practice that is a good deal more speculative but nevertheless sometimes very interesting and

helpful is that of psychoanalyzing a writer through his image patterns. Those who do this usually assume with Spurgeon that

the imagery [a poet] instinctively uses is ... a revelation largely unconscious, given at a moment of heightened feeling, of the furniture of his mind, the channels of his thought, the qualities of things, the objects and incidents he observes and remembers, and perhaps most significant of all, those which he does not observe or remember.¹

However, as many other critics have pointed out, it is impossible to ascertain which images a poet uses instinctively, which he deliberately manufactures, and which he either borrows from specific secondary sources or from the common stock of his cultural environment. Therefore, any so-called "psychoanalysis" must be tentative only.² Nevertheless, it seems clear that various poets prefer to draw their images from different sources, in varying proportions, and some conclusions about their interests and about the nature of their minds can be drawn on the basis of these preferences.

However, the primary reason for investigating the sources of Johnson's imagery in this thesis, is to measure his ability as a writer, according to his own ideals. In theory at least, Johnson advocated the use of all natural phenomena as sources of imagery. He expected poetry to consist of general nature represented by external nature. To serve the correct purpose, the representations of external nature must be as vivid and concrete as possible.

A great poet must prepare himself, by observation, to draw from all areas of nature and to be able to depict his observations accurately.³ It is important to discover how thoroughly Johnson practised this ideal in his own writing.

There are images in the Lives from almost every area of human experience, but there are more referring to various aspects of outdoor life than to any other area. About twenty-seven per cent of the total images are in this category - nearly twice as many as from any other. Images of animal life make up about one quarter of these, with bird images by far the most numerous. The most frequently recurring of all single images in the Lives is the image of the flight of birds used in nearly every case to illustrate the operation of the poetic mind. Typical of these is this statement that

Pope had likewise genius; a mind active, ambitious and adventurous, always investigating; always aspiring; in its widest searches still longing to go forward, in its highest flight still wishing to be higher. (Pope, XI, 164.)

Johnson observes that

mankind expect from elevated genius an uniformity of greatness, and watch its degradation with malicious wonder; like him who, having followed with his eye an eagle into the clouds, should lament that she ever descended to a perch. (Pope, XI, 101.)

Again he says:

Milton when he has expatiated in the sky, may be allowed sometimes to revisit earth; for what other author ever soared so high or sustained his flight so long. (Milton, IX, 177.)

There are also numerous other examples of the same image in the Lives.⁴ That Johnson so frequently made this association between the flight of birds and the operations of the poetic imagination suggests that he did fully appreciate the role of poetic genius and inspiration as opposed to mere common sense as the distinguishing feature of the poetic mind.

Johnson's images drawn from external nature include a great many of light and dark. A frequently recurring image exploits the contrast between light and dark to illustrate the contrast between the good and bad passages of a poem. Thus Johnson, speaking of Milton's poetry, refers to

these bursts of light and involutions of
darkness, these transient and involuntary
excursions and retrocessions of invention
.... (Milton, IX, 132.)⁶

Often he makes the traditional association between evil or ignorance and darkness, and between good or reason and light. Thus he says that Swift's letters "shew the age involved in darkness, and shade the picture with sullen emulation." (Swift, XI, 45.)⁷ He reverses this traditional association when he says of Rochester, "the glare of his general character diffused itself upon his writing."
(Rochester, IX, 204.)

Images of rivers constitute the next most important category of his natural imagery. He most frequently uses the operations of rivers to illustrate qualities of language.

Thus he says of Prior: "His verses always roll, but they seldom flow." (Prior, X, 184.) Of Swift he says: "In his other works is found an equable tenor of easy language which rather trickles than flows." (Swift, XI, 37.)⁸

Characteristics of rivers are used in various other ways. He speaks of "tracing the meandering of [Dryden's] mind" (Dryden, IX, 319.); of the "stream of popularity" being "turned ... against the Whigs" by Swift (Swift, XI, 57.); of "the plenitude of [Cowley's] knowledge [which] flows in upon his page;" and of "pretty lines that are not such as his deep mouth was used to pour" (Cowley, IX, 44, 47.).

One of his best river images is found in the Life of Milton:

Fancy can hardly forbear to conjecture with what temper Milton surveyed the silent progress of his work, and marked its reputation stealing its way in a kind of subterraneous current through fear and silence. (Milton, IX, 138.)

Johnson's natural images include a number of cosmic phenomena. He is particularly interested in the flight of meteors which he often uses to illustrate anything that is prominent or intense but transitory. Thus he says of Dryden: "now was the poetical meteor at the highest: the next moment began its fall." (Dryden, IX, 351.)⁹ Other cosmic images include references to the stars, such as his estimate of Sheffield:

Criticism is no longer ... awed by his splendour, and, being able to take a more steady view, discovers him to be a writer that sometimes glimmers, but rarely shines (Sheffield, X, 154.)

Finally, in this category of natural imagery may be placed a number of miscellaneous references to various other natural phenomena. Among the most frequently recurring of these are a number of images of seasonal change. He seems to have been very conscious of the blighting effect of frost on vegetation which is always used to illustrate the decay in the affairs of men that time occasions. Thus he says of Thomson that

he probably cultivated with new diligence
his blossoms of poetry, which, however,
were in some danger of a blast
(Thomson, XI, 222.)

He says that "every blossom of the Popish Hope was blasted forever by the revolution" (Dryden, IX, 362.), and he speaks of Philips' friends "who decorated him with honorary garlands, which the first breath of contradiction blasted."
(Philips, IX, 255.)¹⁰ There are a number of images of uncultivated vegetation which he usually uses to illustrate lack of discipline or order. He extenuates Dryden's conversion to Popery because not only Sir Kenelm Digby and the two Reynolds were converted, but "Chillingworth himself was a while so entangled in the wilds of controversy, as to retire for quiet to an infallible church." (Dryden, IX, 356.)¹¹

Among several weather images is this from Addison:

The variable weather of the mind, the flying
vapours of incipient madness, ... from
time to time cloud reason, without eclipsing
it (Addison, X, 88.)¹²

The sea seems to have suggested to him only hardships and

danger, and it is often used in a conventional but unusually vivid way to illustrate the nature of life. Thus Richard Savage was

launched upon the ocean of life, only that
he might be swallowed by its quicksands, or
dashed upon its rocks. (Savage, X, 284-5.)¹³

Finally, there are a number of images of height and depth usually used in the conventional way to contrast achievement and failure:

[Dryden] delighted to tread upon the brink
of meaning ... to approach the precipice
of absurdity, and hover over the abyss of
unideal vacancy. (Dryden, IX, 436.)¹⁴

While it is true that many of these images are very general and need not have been the result of a close first-hand acquaintance with the phenomena described, yet this is not always the case. Some of his natural imagery shows evidence of careful first-hand observation:

Learning once made popular is no longer
learning; it has the appearance of some-
thing which we have bestowed upon ourselves,
as the dew appears to rise from the field
which it refreshes. (Dryden, IX, 386.)

This predominance of nature imagery suggests that Johnson did appreciate and notice external nature more than his biographers have given him credit for, and that in some of his many rambles he did carefully remark the "general appearances" of the earth and the sky and the things that they contain.

The second largest category of images is a group referring to various aspects of domestic life. These

constitute about one half as many as those involving external nature, or about fifteen per cent of the total imagery in the Lives. About one third of these are references to fire. Thus he speaks of Shenstone as "a lamp that spent its oil in blazing." (Shenstone, XI, 280.) Many of these fire images are used to illustrate the nature of the poetic imagination. He will allow Philips "if he has less fire to have more smoke." (Philips, IX, 285.)¹⁵ The rest of the fire images are used to illustrate the operations of the irascible passions in men. Steele managed to retain a neutral attitude toward politics in the Tatler until

some unlucky sparkle from a Tory paper set Steele's politicks on fire, and wit at once blazed into faction. He was soon too hot for neutral topicks (Addison, X, 94.)

Milton in his time "lent his breath to blow the flames of contention" (Milton, IX, 99.), and Swift lived at a time when "the nation was ... combustible and a spark set it on fire." (Swift, X, 14.)

A good many of these domestic images refer to some aspect of household management; for instance, this description of Swift's mind in his old age:

His ideas, therefore, being neither renovated by discourse, nor increased by reading, wore gradually away and left his mind vacant (Swift, XI, 34.)¹⁶

Johnson is also fond of clothing images. Many of these are used to illustrate the relation between thought

and language:

Language is the dress of thought, [he says in the Life of Cowley], and ... total negligence of language gives the noblest conceptions the appearance of a fabrick august in the plan, but mean in the material. (Cowley, IX, 53, 64.)

On the other hand, Akenside's

images are displayed with such luxuriance of expression that they are hidden, like Butler's Moon, by a "Veil of Light;" they are forms fantastically lost under superfluity of dress. (Akenside, XI, 360.)¹⁷

Clothing images are used to illustrate other things as well, such as the way that truth

sometimes appears half-veiled in an allegory; sometimes attracts regard in the robes of fancy; and sometimes steps forth in the confidence of reason. She wears a thousand dresses, and in all is pleasing. (Addison, X, 140.)¹⁸

"
The frequency with which Johnson recurs to images of domestic life suggests that he was more interested in domestic affairs than the traditional Johnson image allows for, but which modern biographers, such as Krutch, have suggested.¹⁹

Coming third quantitatively, and constituting about fourteen per cent of the total imagery in The Lives, is a group of images referring to various sports, amusements or hobbies. Judged numerically as well as qualitatively, his gardening images show him to have been very interested in this form of amusement. Various aspects of gardens interested him, but none more than the appearances of flowering

vegetation, which he most often associates with qualities of poetry. He characterizes Pope's Essay on Man as a poem that

abounded in splendid amplifications and sparkling sentences, which were read and admired with no great attention to their ultimate purposes; its flowers caught the eye, which did not see what the gay foliage concealed, and for a time flourished in the sunshine of universal approbation. (Pope, XI, 122-3.)

Before Dryden

we had few elegances or flowers of speech; the roses had not yet been plucked from the bramble, or different colours had not been joined to enliven one another. (Dryden, IX, 396.)

And he explains his age's neglect of Waller by saying:

But compositions merely pretty have the fate of other pretty things, and are quitted in time for something useful; they are flowers fragrant and fair, but of short duration; or they are blossoms to be valued only as they foretell fruits. (Waller, IX, 267.)

There are many other images referring to other aspects of gardens. One example is this familiar one in which the general difference between the prose styles of Dryden and Pope is well illustrated by the contrast between two types of garden:

Dryden's page is a natural field, rising into inequalities, and diversified by the varied exuberance of abundant vegetation; Pope's is a velvet lawn shaven by the scythe, and levelled by the roller. (Pope, IX, 169.)²⁰

This interest in gardening is, of course, something he shared with his age.

Another amusement often referred to in the imagery in the Lives is that of travel. Most of these travel images suggest a traveller walking a beaten path and either deviating or not deviating from this path as a result of certain pressures. Sometimes these pressures are in the form of obstacles on the path. He suggests that before Addison

a judge of propriety was yet wanting, who should survey the track of daily conversation, and free it from the thorns and prickles, which tease the passer, though they do not wound him. (Addison, X, 85.)²¹

Sometimes the pressures are in the form of enticements that lie out of the way. Thus, "Addison never deviates from his track to snatch a grace." (Addison, X, 140.)²² One of his finest travel images is this quest image used to contrast the poetry of Dryden and Rymer:

With Dryden we are wandering in quest of truth; whom we find, if we find her at all, drest in the graces of elegance; and if we miss her, the labour of the pursuit rewards itself; we are led only through fragrance and flowers. Rymer, without taking a nearer, takes a rougher way; every step is to be made through thorns and brambles; and Truth, if we meet her, appears repulsive by her mien and ungraceful by her habit. (Dryden, IX, 388.)

The remainder of the images in this category are miscellaneous references to such things as horse-back riding, foot-racing, hunting, dancing, and clowning, most of which are too general to suggest any particular interest or first-hand acquaintance with the activity except for one reference

to rowing of which Johnson was fond:

I have known men row, and use very hard labour, for diversion, which if they had been tied to they would have thought themselves very unhappy. (Philips, IX, 310.)²³

Again, the evidence that Johnson biographers have presented to demonstrate his love of the common amusements of life, particularly those involving physical activity, is supported by the frequency with which he employs images drawn from this area.

The next largest category of images in the Lives, also constituting about fourteen per cent of the whole, is a series referring to various aspects of national life and institutions. By far the majority of these have to do with some aspect of warfare. That he was dealing with a great many satirical poets, whose efforts are most suitably described in these terms, probably partially accounts for the fact that images of warfare constitute the largest single group - about eight per cent of the total images in the Lives. The predominance of this kind of imagery is also accounted for by the aggressive nature of Johnson's personality. His biographers, starting with Boswell, have characterized him as a man perpetually at war with himself, and with his environment. His imagery certainly bears them out. It is interesting, in the light of Johnson's avowed dislike for romantic conceptions of chivalry and knightly warfare, that most of his war images have this kind of setting. There is not a single reference to any typically modern methods of

warfare such as ~~the~~ guns or gunpowder. The weapons alluded to are invariably bows and arrows or swords and lances. Describing Dryden's way of meeting the attacks of his enemies Johnson says:

... But he lessens the smart of his wounds by the balm of his own approbation, and endeavours to repel the shafts of criticism by opposing a shield of adamantine confidence. (Dryden, IX, 351.)

And Johnson points out that the eventual popularity of the Dunciad among common readers after a period when they ignored it was due to the commentators' explanations of its meaning. The readers now "delighted in the visible effect of those shafts of malice, which they had hitherto contemplated, as shot into the air." (Pope, XI, 112.) There are many such images equating satire with arrows.²⁴ Controversy between literary figures is often detailed by Johnson in the Lives, and it is invariably described in terms of warfare or individual combat with hand-to-hand weapons. He describes how Congreve became

very angry, and [hoped] to conquer Collier with his own weapons But he has the sword, without the arm of Scanderberg; he has his antagonists' coarseness, but not his strength. Collier replied; for contest was his delight: he was not to be frightened from his purpose or his prey. (Congreve, X, 192.)²⁵

Pope's literary life seems to have inspired Johnson to use a particularly large percentage of this kind of imagery, which he uses effectively to create an impression of Pope being engaged in a perpetual fight against his contemporaries and against his environment.²⁶

1875
The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been elected to the office of Justice of the Peace for the year 1875.

John A. Smith, James B. Jones, William C. Brown, David E. White, George F. Green, Henry G. Black, Charles H. Gray, John I. Hall, James J. King, William K. Lee, David L. Miller, George M. Moore, Henry N. Parker, Charles O. Reed, John P. Scott, James Q. Taylor, William R. Vance, David S. Ward, George T. Young.

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There are also references to various public institutions in Johnson's imagery. He seems to have been particularly conscious of the existence of slavery and sympathetic to the plight of the slaves. A typical example of these slave images is one referring to Denham who

... appears to have been one of the first that understood the necessity of emancipating translations from the drudgery of counting lines and interpreting single words. (Denham, IX, 79.)²⁷

He has several references to government, including this to royalty:

Dryden's criticism has the majesty of a queen; Rymer's has the ferocity of a tyrant. (Dryden, IX, 388.)²⁸

Images referring to various forms of criminal activity are also common, of which an example is one he uses to illustrate his point that

distress was not a proper topick of invective. ... Vice [is] not to be insulted The humanity of that man can deserve no panegyrick, who is capable of reproaching a criminal in the hands of the executioner. (Savage, X, 335.)²⁹

In general, the number of references to public institutions seems to bear out his biographers who have stressed his great interest, at least as a spectator, in public life.

The next most common area from which the imagery in the Lives is drawn, constituting about twelve per cent of the total, is that of occupations and trades or skills. These are about equally divided between handicrafts, commerce, practical science and the arts. References to the building

trade, make up most of his handicraft images. For example, in an ironical analogy with the idea he detested that the poet can only write at certain times when he is "right" he says:

The mechanick cannot handle his hammer and
his file at all times with equal dexterity;
there are hours, he knows not why, when his
hand is out. (Milton, IX, 133.)³⁰

He also has references to the trades of weaving (Milton, IX, 172.), mining (Prior, X, 175.), and blacksmithing (Dryden, IX, 405.). He also uses a reference to commerce to explain Milton's character as a writer:

He did not sell literature to all comers
at an open shop; he was a chamber
milliner and measured his commodities
only to his friends. (Milton, IX, 106.)

The exactness and frequency of Johnson's images from practical science suggest that he had a great interest in this field and a considerable understanding of it. This again bears out his biographers, most of whom have pointed out his love of scientific experiments and his activities in the Society of Arts and Sciences. His images of the processes of metallurgy are the most numerous and the best of these. He declares, using one of these images, that

truth indeed is always truth, and reason is
always reason; they have an intrinsic and
unalterable value, and constitute that in-
tellectual gold which defies destruction;
but gold may be so concealed in baser
matter that only a chymist can recover it;
sense may be so hidden in unrefined and
plebeian words that none but philosophers
can distinguish it; and both may be so
buried in impurities, as not to pay the
cost of extraction. (Cowley, IX, 64.)³¹

He demonstrates also a great interest in other sciences such as chemistry,³² and particularly physics. Thus he illustrates the nature of boredom by saying:

He that is weary the first hour is more weary the second; as bodies forced into motion, contrary to their tendency pass more and more slowly through every successive interval of space. (Prior, X, 179.)³³

Although his images drawn from the Arts are not numerous or very striking, nevertheless Johnson does have several that illustrate the nature of poetry by comparison with the art of painting. One of these is this comment on the poetry of Philips:

A picture in miniature is every painter's talent; but a piece for a cupola, where all the figures, are enlarged, yet proportioned to the eye, requires a master's hand. (Philips, IX, 396.)³⁴

The next most prominent category, constituting about nine per cent of the imagery in the Lives, is a series of images referring to various aspects of the human body. About half of these are images of disease and deformity, pain, or their treatment. Their frequency undoubtedly partly results from Johnson's experiencing so many diseases throughout his life. Typical of these is his statement that

contempt is a kind of gangrene, which if it seizes one part of a character, corrupts all the rest by degrees. (Blackmore, X, 217.)³⁵

Johnson's biographers have made voracious appetites for food and for knowledge his best known characteristics,

and his imagery seems to bear this out. There are a number of eating or food images that usually equate food with intellectual curiosity, such as this referring to the youthful Pope:

... He read only to store his mind with facts and images seizing all that his authors presented with undistinguishing voracity and with an appetite for knowledge too eager to be nice. (Pope, XI, 62.)³⁶

That Johnson often found this physical appetite to be so perfectly illustrative of the intellectual one seems to be a good indication of the nature of the latter in his own case. His biographers have all stressed his great craving for intellectual stimulation.

One other aspect of the human body that supplies Johnson with a number of fine images is certain of its natural processes, especially reproduction. His wife never had a child, but on the basis of his imagery he seems to have been somewhat pre-occupied with the processes of pregnancy and birth, which he usually uses to illustrate the nature of the effort involved in producing a work of art. He points out that Butler's Hudibras "... was not produced by a sudden tumult of imagination, or a short paroxysm of violent labor." (Butler, IX, 195.) He says that one of Dryden's rivals "... attempted in blank verse a translation of the Aeneid, which, when dragged into the world, did not live long enough to cry." (Dryden, IX, 431.) And of literature in general he says that

... it is pleasant to see great works in their seminal state, pregnant with latent possibilities of excellence; nor could there be any more delightful entertainment than to trace their gradual growth and expansion (Milton, IX, 120.)³⁷

The final category of images in the Lives that seems worth mentioning is a group that can only be termed literary or imaginative. These constitute about nine per cent of the total imagery. More than half of these are references to classical mythology. The number of these images from the classics is considerable by comparison with some of the other areas but surprisingly small for such an accomplished classical scholar, writing in an age when such imagery was so common. The explanation for this fact undoubtedly lies in Johnson's principle, already mentioned, that "images from art degrade nature" while "images from nature ennoble art." In spite of this he has a number of classical images such as his statement that

the powers of Congreve desert him when he leaves the stage, as Antaeus was no longer strong than when he could touch the ground. (Congreve, X, 196.)³⁸

Johnson, in common with all the neo-classical writers, uses a great deal of personification, but there are surprisingly few instances where the personification is carried far enough to be really classified as an image. Among those instances where it has been is this in which Johnson calls Pope's Essay on Criticism

... a book which teaches how the brow of

Criticism may be smoothed and how she
may be enabled, with all her severity,
to attract and to delight. (Pope, XI,
182.)³⁹

Finally, he has a few imaginative images that use
some supernatural thing to illustrate an idea. An example
of this is his declaration that Savage was used

... to amuse himself with phantoms of
happiness, which were dancing before
him.... (Savage, X, 342.)⁴⁰

This is not strictly an image, since phantoms are not
really concrete, but they do have certain well-known
properties related to the physical (viz., they are non-
physical) that makes it possible to use them as objective
correlatives.*

It seems then that in most cases the conventional
portrait of Johnson is fully supported by his imagery
except for a strong indication that he was more appreciative
of the phenomena of external nature than is usually supposed.
In all other instances Johnson uses the kind of imagery
in the Lives that reflects interests and personal
characteristics that are well-established by biographical
data. This fact supports the view of Spurgeon and others
that there is some correlation between a writer's interests
and personality and the sources of imagery he most frequently
employs.

* For a statistical, diagrammatic analysis of the sources
of the imagery in the Lives, see Appendix II.

The most important information that emerges from this investigation is evidence of the poetic powers of Johnson's mind. We can readily see how diverse and how inclusive are the areas from which he drew his images. He is obviously capable of referring with equal facility to nearly every area of human experience, from outdoor life to books, and from national life and public institutions to domestic life. Truly he meets his own requirement that "to a poet nothing can be useless." His ability to meet this exacting standard goes a long way toward establishing him as a great writer and poet.

(2) Comparison of Johnson's Practice and Theory

Thus far, this investigation of Johnson's practice of imagery has been limited to determining the general areas from which he drew his images. We are now concerned with examining the imagery in the Lives in the light of his own theory. How thoroughly does Johnson's imagery, in practice, exemplify his own principles? The answer to this question should be a reliable measure of the quality of his imagery, since his theory has already been demonstrated to be sound.

The first main principle of Johnson's theory of imagery is his idea that elements of a comparison should come from areas as divergent as possible without straining the comparison. It is an extension of his idea that the greatest poetic pleasure arises from a combination of the natural and the new, which is the basis of one of his most useful critical tools, the distinction between primary and secondary wit. How well do Johnson's images achieve the balance between the natural and the new? What is the quality of their wit?

It would seem that it is far easier for a writer to produce images that seem natural than to produce those that are new. The more natural a comparison is the more likely it is to have been remarked by many others and worn out by frequent use. What is easily remarked by one is easily remarked by all, and the poet must have an unusual wit indeed

if he is to perceive congruities that have always existed but, because of some incongruities, have not been remarked or expressed before. The poet, in a sense, is matching his wit not only against that of every previous poet, but also against nature's ability to camouflage her secrets. In the face of this combined opposition it is a difficult task for the aspiring poet to create imagery that is not trite or not lacking the balance between the natural and the new. Johnson admired the metaphysicals for the thinking their imagery exemplified because he, like every poet, fully realized how much more difficult it is to achieve newness than it is to achieve naturalness in imagery. It is not surprising, then, that, while few writers have difficulty in making their imagery natural, nearly every writer's works include a considerable amount of imagery that lacks the impact of novelty. Johnson's criticism reflects this fact since outside of the metaphysical poets he seldom criticizes a writer for not being natural; the most common fault he singles out is lack of novelty. Johnson's own images seldom seem strained or unnatural. They always show evidence of detailed analysis and careful presentation of the points of comparison so that they cannot be missed. Lest the truth of the likeness might not be immediately perceived he often carefully demonstrates it by pointing out all the links between the elements. Thus in illustrating the relationship of language to thought he says:

Language is the dress of thought; and as the noblest mien, or most graceful action, would be degraded and obscured by a garb appropriated to the gross employments of rusticks and mechanics so the most heroic sentiments will lose their efficacy and the most splendid ideas drop their magnificence if they are conveyed by words used commonly upon low and trivial occasions, debased by vulgar mouths, contaminated by inelegant applications. (Cowley, IX, 64.)

After this much explanation and detail who could feel that there was anything unnatural about this comparison?

Another frequently used device for achieving the same result is that of carefully labelling each detail of the vehicle with its correlative in the tenor. Thus he says:

Savage knew that the track of elegy had been so long beaten that it was impossible to travel in it without treading in the footsteps of those who had gone before him, and therefore, it was necessary that he might distinguish himself from the herd of encomiasts to find out some new walk of funeral panegyrick. (Savage, X, 372.)

Another favorite device is to juxtapose the explanation and the image so that one acts as the concrete example of the other. This is what he does when he says that the meta-physical poets

... could no more represent, by their slender conceits and laboured particularities, the prospects of nature, or the scenes of life, than he who dissects a sunbeam with a prism can exhibit the wide effulgence of a summer noon. (Cowley, IX, 21-22.)

Sometimes he uses a second image to add further links to the comparison, as he does in this reference to Dryden's panegyrics:

As many odoriferous bodies are observed to diffuse perfumes from year to year, without sensible diminution of bulk or weight, he appears never to have impoverished his mint of flattery by his expences, however lavish. He had all the forms of excellence, intellectual and moral, combined in his mind with endless variation, and when he had scattered on the hero of the day the golden shower of wit and virtue he had ready for him whom he wished to court on the morrow, new wit and virtue with another stamp. (Dryden, IX, 376.)

Only occasionally does Johnson seem to feel that the comparison is so obvious that little explanation is needed.

Thus he says that

the spangles of wit which [Prior] could afford he knew how to polish; but he wanted the bullion of his master. Butler pours out a negligent profusion certain of the weight, but careless of the stamp. Prior has comparatively little, but with that little he makes a fine show. (Prior, X, 178.)

Whether by carefully choosing elements that have many obvious links of comparison, or by emphasizing the links that there are, Johnson rarely fails to make his images seem perfectly natural.

The difficult problem, for a writer, is to create a sense of novelty. There are two reasons why imagery may fail in this regard. Either it is worn out from frequent use, or the compared elements are not brought together from areas sufficiently divergent to make the similarities seem surprising by virtue of the contrasting dissimilarities. Very few of the images in the Lives are trite. It is true that Johnson often compares things that are commonly compared,

but he generally manages to create a sense of novelty by carrying the analogy further and thereby pointing out unusual similarities. This is what saves his frequently used comparison of satire to arrows shot from a bow from being trite. Of Dryden he says:

Both his person and party were exposed in their turns to the shafts of satire, which, though neither so well pointed, nor perhaps so well aimed, undoubtedly drew blood. (Dryden, IX, 354.)

There are endless variations of the same image:

The shafts of satire were directed equally in vain against Cibber and Osborne; being repelled by the impenetrable impudence of one and deadened by the impassive dullness of the other. (Pope, XI, 141.)

Our literature can show many metaphors comparing knowledge to hidden treasures, but Johnson usually manages to add a twist of novelty to his use of the comparison. Thus he suggests that Dryden's "... intellectual treasures were great though they were locked up from his own use." (Dryden, IX, 375.) And Cowley's "... known wealth of ideas was so great that he might have borrowed without loss of credit." (Cowley, IX, 62.) The comparison of flatterers to prostitutes is an old one that Johnson manages to make new:

He that has flattery ready for all whom the vicissitudes of the world may happen to exalt, must be scorned as a prostituted mind; that may retain the glitter of wit, but has lost the dignity of virtue. (Waller, IX, 253.)

The "light of reason" is scarcely a novel comparison, but it comes alive in Johnson's hands when he says that Savage

The first of these is the fact that the
the second is the fact that the
the third is the fact that the

the fourth is the fact that the
the fifth is the fact that the
the sixth is the fact that the
the seventh is the fact that the
the eighth is the fact that the
the ninth is the fact that the
the tenth is the fact that the

the eleventh is the fact that the
the twelfth is the fact that the
the thirteenth is the fact that the
the fourteenth is the fact that the
the fifteenth is the fact that the
the sixteenth is the fact that the
the seventeenth is the fact that the
the eighteenth is the fact that the
the nineteenth is the fact that the
the twentieth is the fact that the

the twenty-first is the fact that the
the twenty-second is the fact that the
the twenty-third is the fact that the
the twenty-fourth is the fact that the
the twenty-fifth is the fact that the
the twenty-sixth is the fact that the
the twenty-seventh is the fact that the
the twenty-eighth is the fact that the
the twenty-ninth is the fact that the
the thirtieth is the fact that the

....willingly turned his eyes from the light of reason when it would have discovered the illusion, and shown him what he never wished to see, his real state. (Savage, X, 342.)

And finally, Johnson adds a touch of novelty to the oft-used comparison of the beauties of poetry to the beauties of a flower garden when he says of Akenside's poetry that

the reader wanders through the gay diffusion, sometimes amazed, and sometimes delighted, but, after many turnings in the flowery labyrinth, comes out as he went in. He remarked little, and laid hold on nothing. (Akenside, XI, 360.)

All these examples serve to demonstrate one of the most characteristic features of Johnson's images. They are not new because he has brought elements together that were never brought together before; they are new because he carries the analogy further than it is usually carried, and thereby draws attention to new congruities. A typical Johnson image is one which carries the charm of naturalness by making a familiar comparison but generates the excitement of novelty by outlining links that lie beyond its conventional boundaries.

The second suggested reason why images may be natural but not new is that the compared elements may not come from areas sufficiently divergent. As Johnson says:

A simile may be compared to lines converging at a point, and 'is more excellent as the lines approach from greater distance. (Addison, X, 117.)

It has already been demonstrated that Johnson best liked

comparisons which illustrate abstract concepts by reference to concrete things and the definition used in my thesis to separate image from non-image includes this concept. Only this kind of comparison has been considered as imagery. This means that every one of Johnson's images brings elements together that are as divergent as the concrete is divergent from the abstract. Espousing this principle, it was not necessary for Johnson to search for "occult resemblances in things apparently unlike," as did the metaphysicals, in order to create compelling imagery. There is sufficient disparity between the concrete and the abstract to provide at least a minimum degree of the sense of novelty in a comparison. However, it should be remarked that Johnson often increases the novelty of some of his images beyond that arising from all comparisons of concrete with abstract, by bringing together unusually disparate elements. Such is his comparison of the way Dryden's pride in the cleverness of his poems flattering the undeserving exceeded his shame at his pettiness; with the way one's pride in his fertility, demonstrated by making a prostitute pregnant, exceeds his shame at the degradation of the act. Dryden

brings praise rather as a tribute than a gift, more delighted with the fertility of his invention than mortified by the prostitution of his judgement. (Dryden, IX, 377.)

Another example is his comparison of Rochester's attempt to prove his poetic skill by writing on the topic "Nothing"

with an attempt to prove one's fertility by copulating with a barren woman. "He is not the first who has chosen this barren topic for the boast of his fertility." (Rochester, IX, 205.) He compares the role of imagination in creating poetry to the role of heat in making things grow when he says that

the heat of [Dryden's] imagination raised it
The State of Innocence and the Fall of Man
 in a month. (Dryden, IX, 342.)

There are many other unusual concurrences of elements such as his comparison of the progress of Milton's reputation to the progress of an underground river,⁴¹ his comparison of the difficulty of discerning the sources of popular learning to the difficulty of deciding the source of the dew,⁴² and his comparison of the pleasure of seeing the conception and gradual growth of a work of art to the pleasure a person might get from seeing the conception and gradual growth of a fetus.⁴³ These examples are sufficient to demonstrate that Johnson had an eye for unusual comparisons and the ability to use them effectively. These abilities, assisted by his technique of expanding stock comparisons in a new way, give an abundance of the spice of novelty to complement the naturalness of the imagery he created in the Lives. It seems then that, in his practice of imagery, Johnson generally follows the first main principle of his theory, which partially accounts for the high quality of the results.

His second basic principle is that imagery should stimulate both the intellect and the emotions, and that there should be a proper balance between these qualities, and the right kind of emotional appeal, according to the intended purpose of the poetry. That it might be perfectly illustrative and therefore engage the intellect, Johnson required two things of imagery: it must be readily understandable, and it must be literally true to nature on both sides of the comparison. There is no question about whether or not Johnson's images meet the first of these requirements. He has few images that are not perfectly and immediately understandable. Most of his images are drawn from areas of common experience and observation and presented in such a way that their meaning is precise and explicit. It is true that sometimes the image is so involved that the reader must stop and analyze it in order to grasp the full implications, but they are always explicit and well-defined. Thus when defining the nature of boredom he says:

He that is weary the first hour is more
weary the second; as bodies forced into
motion, contrary to their tendency; pass
more and more slowly through every successive
interval of space (Prior, X, 179.),

the application of vehicle to tenor may not be immediately obvious. Nor may it be when he suggests that

... nobody can be taught faster than he
can learn. The speed of the horseman
must be limited by the power of the horse.
(Milton, IX, 197.)

However, even a superficial analysis is enough to make the

relationship clear.

Far more typical of Johnson's images are those that immediately yield their full implications, such as his declaration that

at the succession of King James, to whom he was intimately known, ... [Sheffield] naturally expected still brighter sunshine; but all know how soon that reign began to gather clouds. (Sheffield, X, 151.)

Another example is his assurance that the reader of Swift

is neither required to mount elevations nor to explore profundities; his passage is always on a level, along solid ground, without asperities, without obstructions. (Swift, XI, 38.)

But whether the meaning is immediately obvious or becomes apparent only after some consideration, Johnson's images always have some readily understandable, specific meaning, and a high illustrative value.

Johnson's imagery also, generally, exemplifies his second requirement for images to be intellectually satisfying: that comparisons should not be literally true on one side and only metaphorically true on the other. It has already been pointed out that apparently Johnson means by this that no details should be included in the image that do not have equal application to both sides of the comparison. No qualities or aspects of the vehicle should be brought into focus merely to make a more vivid and interesting picture if these details do not also clearly serve to illustrate qualities or aspects of the tenor.

Johnson generally abides very scrupulously by this rule. As a result, his illustrations usually give the impression of being perfectly smooth, à propos, and well-controlled. An example of an image that gives this impression is his statement that

the heat of Milton's mind may be said
to sublimate his learning, to throw off
into his work the spirit of science un-
mingled with its grosser parts. (Milton,
IX, 167.)

The metaphor he uses to illustrate the lack of a poetic vocabulary in English before Dryden is also delightful because it has no surplus parts:

Those happy combinations of words which
distinguish poetry from prose had been
rarely attempted: we had few elegances
or flowers of speech; the roses had not
yet been plucked from the bramble, or
different colours had not been joined to
enliven one another. (Dryden, IX, 396.)

Johnson's images are generally quite involved, yet he usually manages to maintain an analytic correlation between tenor and vehicle that is intellectually delightful. Another example is his explanation that Dryden

prefixed a discourse upon translation [to
his translation of the "Epistles of Ovid"]
which was then struggling for the liberty
that it now enjoys. Why it should find
any difficulty in breaking the shackles of
verbal interpretation, which must forever
debar it from elegance, it would be dif-
ficult to conjecture, were not the power
of prejudice every day observed. (Dryden,
IX, 353.)

Every detail mentioned in this image has equal application to the tenor and the vehicle.

The few occasions when he breaks this rule always appear to be the sacrifice of intellectual accuracy to the god of emotion. Occasionally a desire to heighten the emotional quality of the image, or to give it greater persuasiveness or propaganda value causes Johnson to use comparisons that are not intellectually sound because both sides are not equally true to nature. Thus in attacking Milton's argument against censorship he says that

... it seems not more reasonable to leave the right of printing unrestrained because writers may be afterwards censured than it would be to sleep with doors unbolted, because by our laws we can hang a thief. (Milton, IX, 105.)

This oratorically persuasive but rather misleading comparison sacrifices logic to propaganda. The same thing happens when he says that Savage

... might justly represent, that he ought to have been considered as a lion in the toils, and demand to be released before the dogs should be loosed upon him. (Savage, X, 383.)

In his desire to vindicate the character of his friend, Johnson compares him to a lion caught in the toils, about to be unjustly set upon - a comparison that is hardly an accurate depiction of the dissolute, disreputable aggressor in the controversy.

However, Johnson does have many images that communicate strong feelings without sacrificing the logic of comparison. A good example of these is his discussion of Milton's History of England of which he says:

On this history the licenser again fixed his claws, and before he would transmit it to the press tore out several parts. (Milton, IX, 139.)

This image is effective because it communicates so accurately the feelings of an author who sees his work mutilated by the censor, yet at the same time it maintains a logical correspondence between tenor and vehicle. Most of Johnson's images have the power to engage the intellect at the same time that they emotionally charge the subject with just the proper feeling. This comparison of an habitual plagiarist to a poacher seems to create just the right attitude:

I have traced [Prior] among the French Epigrammatists, and have been informed that he poached for prey among obscure authors. (Prior, X, 180.)

He casts a definite emotional aura around Savage's "The Wanderer" when he says that

... the whole performance is not so much a regular fabrick as a heap of shining materials thrown together by accident, which strikes rather with the solemn magnificence of a stupendous ruin, than the elegant grandeur of a finished pile. (Savage, X, 324.)

Another image, describing the development of Pope's mind, is as analytically sound as it is descriptive:

Pope foresaw the future efflorescence of imagery then budding in his mind, and resolved to spare no art, or industry of cultivation. The soft luxuriance of his fancy was already shooting, and all the gay varieties of diction were ready at his hand to colour and embellish it. (Pope, XI, 71.)

And a high regard for Dryden's "Ode to Anne Killegrew" is well expressed in this simple but effective image:

All the stanzas indeed are not equal. An imperial crown cannot be one continued diamond; the gems must be held together by some less valuable matter. (Dryden, IX, 416.)

It seems obvious then that much of Johnson's imagery does provide a high degree of both intellectual and emotional stimulation, thereby exemplifying the second main principle of his theory of imagery.

The third principle is his belief that imagery should show a balance between particularity and generality, or that it should be as sensory and concrete as possible without drawing attention away from the tenor to the vehicle. That he seldom sacrificed the illustrative quality of his images has already been demonstrated. His imagery has never been charged with not being general enough, so it needs no defense in this regard. From the charge of being too general, and therefore lacking in concrete vividness, he does need defending. W.K. Wimsatt, who has written the definitive work on Johnson's prose style, criticizes Johnson's imagery and practically denies that he has any, because

... Johnson's terms tend to be non-sensory, his meaning to be general and abstract. If Johnson's writing may be said to contain imagery, we must understand the term in another sense, that of simply non-literal expression. If it be remembered that not all non-literal expression, that is, not all metaphor need be highly sensory, it can be admitted that in some sense Johnson's writing contains imagery.⁴⁴

Although Johnson's imagery is general to a degree consistent with his theory, Wimsatt goes too far in saying that Johnson's images are non-sensory. Only those that are particular enough to evoke a concrete sense impression have been considered in this thesis. Their number refutes Wimsatt's statement. W.J. Bate is much closer to the mark when he suggests that

... in the union of apt concrete illustration with incisive, logical presence of mind Johnson is hardly excelled by any prose writer since the seventeenth century except Burke.⁴⁵

There are many examples in the Lives of images that bear out Bate's assertion and achieve their effect because of a balance between particularity and generality. His image praising Milton's imagination has a grandeur that a more particularized description would lack:

Milton's delight was to sport in the wide regions of possibility; reality was a scene too narrow for his mind. He sent his faculties out upon discovery into worlds where only imagination can travel. (Milton, IX, 168.)

Again he gives an impression of remarkable beauty by generalized description when he describes Young's Night Thoughts as

... a wilderness of thought, in which the fertility of fancy scatters flowers of every hue and of every odour. (Young, XI, 343.)

He is able to create a vivid sense impression without drawing attention away from the tenor to the vehicle, by

tempering particularity with generality, in the following image:

The two parts of The Conquest of Granada are written with a seeming determination to glut the public with dramatic wonders, to exhibit in its highest elevation a theatrical meteor of incredible love and impossible valour, and to leave no room for a wilder flight to the extravagance of posterity. All the rays of romantick heat, whether amorous or warlike glow in Almanzor by a kind of concentration. (Dryden, IX, 332.)

He achieves the same thing when he speaks of

... the craving pain of unsatisfied curiosity. To this hunger of the mind plain sense is grateful; that which fills the void removes uneasiness, and to be free from pain for a while is pleasure; but repletion generates fastidiousness; a saturated intellect soon becomes luxurious, knowledge finds no willing reception till it is recommended by artificial diction. (Pope, XI, 185.)

Often by mentioning a minimum of significant details he creates a vivid sense impression from what would otherwise be an abstract generalization. Thus he says that

it is no more to be required that wit should always be blazing than that the sun should always stand at noon. (Milton, IX, 177.)

Again, he suggests that "the good and evil of Eternity are too ponderous for the wings of wit." (Milton, IX, 172.)

And he observes of one of the pamphlets written by Colley Cibber to lampoon Pope that

[Pope] should ... have suffered the pamphlet to flutter and die, without confessing that it stung him. (Pope, XI, 140.)

No purpose would be served by giving more of the many examples of sensory images in the Lives. One of Johnson's criteria for determining the effectiveness of imagery is whether or not it evokes a concrete sense impression. Every example cited in this thesis exemplifies this quality. True, there are a number of non-sensory figurative expressions like the one quoted by Wimsatt to prove his point:

But good sense alone is a sedate and quiescent quality, which manages its possessions well, but does not increase them. (Pope, XI, 164.)⁴⁶

But according to the terms of the definition of imagery in this thesis, these are not images at all. They are certainly not, as Wimsatt has suggested, typical of Johnson's imagery.

Thus, Johnson's imagery in practice thoroughly exemplifies his theory. In most cases the elements of his comparisons are drawn from widely divergent areas, yet the comparisons are not strained. His images do generally meet his requirements for engaging the intellect, yet they also have a high emotional quality. And they generally exemplify a balance between particularity and generality that enables them to be both functional and sensory. Furthermore, as was previously demonstrated, Johnson's imagery has all the variety and fascination of nature itself, since he drew from nearly every area of human experience. Evaluated according to his own theory then, Johnson's imagery

rates high, a fact that is both supported by, and partially accounts for, the enduring quality of his Lives of the Poets.

(3) Comparison of Imagery in the "Lives"
with that in other Writings

There is no indication in Johnson's literary criticism that he differentiated between poetic and prose imagery. His theory seems to apply equally to all imagery, whether it appears in critical essays, in imaginative prose, or in poetry. It would be interesting to see if such a distinction exists in Johnson's own practice. An analysis of the imagery in Rasselas, an example of imaginative prose, and in Johnson's two major poems should be sufficiently representative to be a reliable indication.

Although there is relatively much more imagery in the poems than in the Lives, and more than twice as many images per page in Rasselas as there are in the Lives, there appears to be no significant difference between the sources of the imagery in these three cases. The imagery in the two major poems and in Rasselas falls into the same general categories in approximately similar proportions as that in the Lives. The largest single category in the imaginative prose and in the poetry, as it is in the Lives, is that of images of nature. Among the many bird and animal images in Rasselas is this used by Imlac to explain the raison d'être of the pyramid:

It seems to have been erected only in
 compliance with that hunger of imagination
 which preys incessantly upon life.
 (Rasselas, Ch. XXX.)

Many other nature images in Rasselas refer to bodies of water or characteristics of water like the following, which also suggests that Johnson carefully observed and noted natural phenomena. Nekayah found while living with the families of the common people that

their grief ..., like their joy was
transient One desire easily gave way
to another, as a second stone cast into
the water effaces and confounds the circle
of the first. (Rasselas, Ch. XXV.)

Natural images also abound in the poems and include many bird and animal images:

Yet ev'n on this her load Misfortune flings
To press the weary minutes' flagging wings.
(Vanity of Human Wishes, 299-300)

And there are also many references in the poems to other natural phenomena such as Johnson's enquiry:

Must helpless man in ignorance sedate,
Roll darkling down the torrent of his fate?
(Vanity of Human Wishes, 345-346)

The imaginative prose and the poetry also contain a number of images from domestic life. Nekayah argues the advantages of an early marriage because

... minds susceptible of new impressions
... might wear away their dissimilitudes
by long cohabitation, as soft bodies, by
continual attrition, conform their sur-
faces to each other. (Rasselas, Ch. XXVIII.)

And in the Vanity of Human Wishes we find a fire image, typical of many in the Lives:

With fatal heat impetuous courage glows.
(Line 17)

There are also many images in these works that refer

to various aspects of public life and institutions. Among a number of images of warfare in Rasselas is the exhortation, overheard by Rasselas, of the sage to his audience to

... lay aside their prejudices and arm themselves against the shafts of malice or misfortune by invulnerable patience.
(Rasselas, Ch. XVIII.)

And in London Johnson assures us that

Fate never wounds more deep the gen'rous heart,
Than when a blockhead's insult points the dart.
(lines 168-169)

Sports and amusements supply Johnson with images in these works as they do in the Lives. He invites us in the Vanity of Human Wishes to

See Motley life in modern trappings dress'd,
And feed with varied fools th'eternal jest.
(lines 51 and 52)

And Rasselas refers to flower gradens in order to illustrate the disadvantages of early marriages:

The daughter begins to bloom before the
mother can be content to fade. (Rasselas,
Ch. XXVIII.)

Among the images relating to the human body found in the imaginative works is Johnson's observation about the aspiring scholar:

Through all his veins the fever of renown
Burns from the strong contagion of the gown.
(Vanity of Human Wishes, 137-138)

And Nekayah complains:

How could a mind, hungry for knowledge,
be willing, in an intellectual famine, to
lose such as banquet as Pekuah's conversation.
(Rasselas, Ch. XXXVIII.)

No images in the category of occupations and skills appear in Rasselas, but there are several in the poems. An example is Johnson's use of a reference to commerce to demonstrate the corrupt state of London:

Where looks are merchandise, and smiles are sold;
Where won by bribes, by flatteries implor'd,
The groom retails the favours of his Lord.
(London, 179-181)*

It is significant that Johnson drew his imagery from the same sources in his imaginative works as he did in the Lives.

It is even more significant that there appears to be the same correlation between theory and practice in his poetic that there is in his prose imagery. Except for a degree of compression, the images in his poetry and in his imaginative prose do not differ in purpose or in form from those in the Lives. There is the same attempt in both to make comparisons that are both natural and new by bringing together elements as disparate as possible without straining the comparison, or by adding a new twist to a familiar comparison. Thus in the Vanity of Human Wishes he compares placid old age to an iceberg:

An age that melts with unperceived decay
And glides in modest innocence away.
(lines 293-294)

And in Rasselas he makes new the familiar comparison of life

* For a statistical analysis of the kinds of imagery in Rasselas and in the two major poems see Appendix III.

to a river by carrying it a step further:

Do not suffer life to stagnate; it will
grow muddy for want of motion: commit your-
self again to the current of the world.
(Rasselas, Ch. XXXIV.)

There is the same concern in both to create imagery that
is intellectually engaging and emotionally gripping. In
the Vanity of Human Wishes he asks:

For why did Wolsey, near the steeps of fate,
On weak foundations raise th'enormous weight?
Why but to sink beneath misfortune's blow,
With louder ruin to the gulfs below?
(lines 125-128)

And Imlac tells Rasselas that

when fancy, the parent of passion, usurps
the dominion of the mind, nothing ensues
but the natural effects of unlawful
government, perturbation and confusion
.... She betrays the fortress of the in-
tellect to rebels, and excites her child-
ren to sedition against reason, their law-
ful sovereign. (Rasselas, Ch. XVIII.)

There is also the same balance in both between particularity
and generality, or the same degree of sensory concreteness
in the imagery. Thus in Vanity of Human Wishes he compares
the politically ambitious to a flame:

Athirst for wealth, and burning to be great;
....
They mount, they shine, evaporate, and fall.
(lines 75 and 77)

And Imlac tells Rasselas that

the world which you figure to yourself
smooth and quiet as the lake in the valley,
you will find a sea foaming with tempests
and boiling with whirlpools: you will be
sometimes overwhelmed by the waves of
violence, and sometimes dashed against
the rocks of treachery. (Rasselas, Ch. XII.)

These are only a few of the many examples in his poetry and in his imaginative prose of images that exemplify the principles of Johnson's theory of imagery. However, they are enough to show that there is no perceptible difference in form or purpose between his prose imagery and his poetic imagery. He seems to have created both according to the same principles, as well as to have drawn them from the same sources. In practice, as in theory, he makes no differentiation between poetic and prose imagery.

(4) The Contribution of the Imagery to the Effectiveness
of the "Lives"

Our final concern is an assessment of the contribution made by Johnson's imagery to the effectiveness of the Lives of the Poets. This collection of essays is undoubtedly Johnson's masterpiece, and from its publication it has been regarded as one of the great achievements in English literature. Nearly all critics would agree with Krutch that

the Lives of the Poets is still one of the most entertaining and the most impressive collections of critical essays in the English language.⁴⁷

Many of them have suggested that the greatness of the Lives lies as much in the way that it is written as it does in the matter it contains. For example, Bate maintains that

these volumes are not only a landmark in the history of criticism. They are also the finest example of one of the great English prose styles.⁴⁸

And Hodgart agrees that "the charm of the essays comes from the relaxed, confident style."⁴⁹ There can be little doubt that this widespread impression of the Lives is at least partially due to the imagery.

Quantitative measurements of imagery can be misleading, but there is some significance in the fact that, according to a definition that includes only the best of what could be called imagery, there are about two hundred and seventy distinct images in the Lives, which is an

average of nearly one to every four pages.⁵⁰ This is almost half as many images per page as there are in Rasselas, an example of imaginative prose. The Life of Cowley contains the most images - roughly one for every two pages - with that of Dryden a close second with one for every three pages. Following closely in order of quantity are the lives of Milton, Pope, Swift, and Addison. The Life of Savage, written much earlier than the rest, has less than half the imagery per page of the other major lives; the minor lives contain less than a third as much imagery as the major lives.⁵¹ It is significant, too, that the critical sections of the major lives contain nearly twice as many images per page as the biographical sections.⁵²

It seems more than coincidental that those parts of the Lives of the Poets that contain the most imagery are generally the parts that have always been most appreciated. Johnson himself was proudest of the Life of Cowley. Most modern Johnson readers prefer the lives of Pope and Dryden.⁵³ The Life of Savage is probably the least read of the major lives, and the minor lives are read even less. Furthermore, the critical sections of the work are more widely read and acclaimed than the biographical sections. It is significant that where Johnson was inspired, and took the pains, to produce his best work he also created the greatest quantity of imagery and the most enjoyable prose. This imagery must make a significant contribution to the effectiveness of his writing.

A close look at some of the finer passages in the Lives shows precisely what the nature of that contribution is. Imagery makes his writing effective in several ways. His power of summary, which is one of his outstanding features, often results from the use of an image. The summation of his general impression of Milton's Paradise Lost is a good example:

Paradise Lost is one of the books which the reader admires and lays down, and forgets to take up again. None ever wished it longer than it is. Its perusal is a duty rather than a pleasure. We read Milton for instruction, retire harassed and overburdened, and look elsewhere for recreation; we desert our master and seek for companions. (Milton, IX, 173.)

It would be difficult to find a more apt summary than Johnson's of the essential character of Congreve's comedies:

His personages are a kind of intellectual gladiators; every sentence is to ward or strike; the contest of smartness is never intermitted; his wit is a meteor playing to and fro with alternate coruscations. (Congreve, X, 196.)

And the summary of his opinion of Butler's burlesque in Hudibras is effective because of the image employed:

It is a kind of artifice which by frequent repetition detects itself; and the reader, learning in time what he is to expect, lays down his book, as the spectator turns away from a second exhibition of those tricks, of which the only use is to shew that they can be played. (Butler, IX, 200.)

Another of the outstanding features of the Lives is the force and aptness of the comparisons. When Johnson compares two works, or two writers, or two characters he

often achieves a vigor and a clarity that is startling. More often than not, this results from his use of imagery. A case in point is his comparison of the criticism of Dryden and Rymer:

Dryden's criticism has the majesty of a queen; Rymer's has the ferocity of a tyrant. (Dryden, IX, 388.)⁵⁴

Another apt comparison makes clear the distinction between the abilities of Prior and Butler:

The spangles of wit which [Prior] could afford, he knew how to polish; but he wanted the bullion of his master. Butler pours out a negligent profusion certain of the weight, but careless of the stamp. Prior has comparatively little, but with that little he makes a fine show. (Prior, X, 178.)

But perhaps the finest example of a comparison that draws its effectiveness from imagery, occurs in one of the best-known passages in the Lives, Johnson's comparison of Dryden and Pope. First he compares their prose styles, then expands into a comparison of their poetic genius:

Dryden's page is a natural field, rising into inequalities, and diversified by the varied exuberance of abundant vegetation; Pope's is a velvet lawn, shaven by the scythe, and levelled by the roller. ... If the flights of Dryden are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing. If of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope's the heat is more regular and constant. (Pope, XI, 169-170.)

The whole passage involved is a brilliant example of comparative criticism, and it reaches its greatest heights with the imagery.

The third great contribution made by the imagery to the effectiveness of the Lives of the Poets is in the way that it introduces an emotional aura or flavour into what could otherwise be dry, abstract essays. There are many images in this work that carry considerable emotional appeal. Together, they lend the essential emotional flavour of creative art to the Lives. The critical sections are particularly indebted to the imagery in this regard. There is a definite emotional element in all biography that provides the flavour of creative writing, so it is not surprising to find this in the biographical sections of the Lives. However, the critical sections have much the same flavour, and this is undoubtedly provided by the imagery, which is more concentrated here. Through imagery, Johnson not only makes us think of his critical opinions, he makes us feel them as well. He communicates his admiration for Dryden generally as he does for his prose style through well-chosen images:

His style could not easily be imitated either seriously or ludicrously The beauty who is totally free from disproportion of parts and features cannot be ridiculed by an overcharged resemblance. (Dryden, IX, 394.)

A dislike for Pope's personality is the natural reaction, at least for most parents, to the association Johnson introduces in this image:

He expected that everything should give way to his ease or humour; as a child, whose parents will not hear her cry, has

unresisted dominion in the nursery.
(Pope, XI, 150.)

But undoubtedly the best example in the Lives of imagery providing the emotional aura is in the Life of Milton.

Much of what Johnson says about Milton is highly critical, and yet the reader of this piece cannot help but feel the great reverence and respect Johnson felt for this poet, that led him, in spite of himself, to rank him as the second greatest poet in English. Most of this feeling is generated by the images, which are particularly numerous in this critical section:

Dryden remarks that Milton has some flats among his elevations A palace must have passages; a poem must have transitions In a great work there is a vicissitude of luminous and opaque parts, as there is in the world a succession of day and night. Milton, when he has expatiated in the sky, may be allowed sometimes to revisit earth; for what other author ever soared so high, or sustained his flight so long? (Milton, IX, 177.)

Further on he adds:

Such is the power of his poetry that his call is obeyed without resistance, the reader feels himself in captivity to a higher and a nobler mind, and criticism sinks in admiration. (Milton, IX, 179.)

And after carefully enumerating the many faults in Paradise Lost he completely excuses them because

exalted genius and extensive learning [have made Paradise Lost the] vehicle of so much instruction and so much pleasure, ... [that] like other lovers, we find grace in its deformity. (Milton, IX, 180.)

Johnson feels that, like the eternal verities of nature,

Milton is beyond criticism, and his choice of images makes us feel it too. Throughout the Lives, but especially in the critical sections, Johnson adds, through imagery, an emotional aura and elements of beauty that lift his prose to a high place in the realms of imaginative writing.

Perhaps the essential overall contribution made by the imagery to the effectiveness of the Lives of the Poets lies in what it contributes to clarity and compression. Achieving these two qualities is one of the greatest problems of literary critics, owing to the indefinite and often complicated nature of the concepts involved, and the lack of an adequate critical vocabulary. That Johnson achieves them in the Lives to such a remarkable degree is an eloquent testimony to the effectiveness of the imagery. Virtually every image in the Lives serves to communicate some concept more clearly and more economically than could otherwise be done. Johnson's analysis of Cowley's mind is only one of many fine examples:

His strength always appears in his agility;
his volatility is not the flutter of a
light, but the bound of an elastic mind.
(Cowley, IX, 41.)

He compresses his explanation for the lack of appreciation by his contemporaries for Philips into a very few meaningful words when he says that

he must look little in their eyes, when he
soars so high as to be almost out of their
view. (Philips, IX, 311.)

This contribution of the imagery is particularly evident

when he is dealing with such difficult critical problems as description of a prose style. There are many examples in the Lives of clearly articulated critical revelations that owe their forcefulness and clarity to the imagery.

One of these is his judgement that

[Addison's] page is always luminous, but never blazes in unexpected splendour.
(Addison, X, 140.)

Among the best examples of this function of the imagery are his summaries and comparisons, for it is these same qualities of clarity and compression, provided by the imagery, that make these passages so outstanding. Even the emotional aura created by the imagery is most valuable as an aid to clearer communication with fewer words. Throughout, the imagery makes a great contribution to the most outstanding portions of the Lives as it does to these two qualities that above all make the Lives of the Poets so effective.

That his imagery makes such a great contribution to the effectiveness of this work is a further testimony of the adequacy of his theory of imagery. We have seen how Johnson's use of the word "imagery" differs from the modern use, and what his equivalent terms to modern "imagery" are. We have seen the essentials of his theory of imagery: that an image should be both natural and new by bringing together elements from areas as divergent as is possible without straining the comparison; that imagery should

satisfy both the emotions and the intellect - the latter by being easily understandable and literally true to nature on both sides of the comparison; and that imagery should be as sensory and concrete as is possible without perverting its true function. We have seen how thoroughly the imagery in the Lives exemplifies the principles of his theory, and the facility with which Johnson was able to draw from the most diverse areas of human experience for his images. And finally we have seen that, because it so thoroughly exemplifies his theory, Johnson's imagery makes a significant contribution to the effectiveness of the Lives. Samuel Johnson's achievements in the field of imagery, both in theory and in practice, are a real credit to this great critic and poet.

FOOTNOTES

Introduction

- ¹ C. Day Lewis, The Poetic Image, p. 18.
- ² J. Middleton Murry, "Metaphor," Selected Criticism, p. 67.
- ³ I.A. Richards, Principles of Literary Criticism, p. 119.
- ⁴ René Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature, p. 202.

Part I

- ¹ All references to Johnson's works, in this thesis, are to the edition of Arthur Murphy, The Works of Samuel Johnson, LL.D., in Twelve Volumes. London, 1810. References to the Lives will be designated by the name only of the poet from whose biography the reference is taken.
- ² British Synonyms Discriminated. Quoted from Wordsworth's Literary Criticism, ed. Smith, p. 156.
- ³ From this point, the term "imagery," when used in this thesis, will bear its modern meaning, except of course where it appears in quotes from Johnson. In such cases it will bear his meaning.
- ⁴ Quoted from Joseph Brown, The Critical Opinions of Samuel Johnson, p. 5.
- ⁵ Eliot has said that "the only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative;' in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked." (Quoted from Hugh Williamson, The Poetry of T.S. Eliot, p. 49.) Elsewhere Eliot has given high praise to the metaphysical poets for what he considers to be their essential quality, the ability to give "... a direct sensuous apprehension of thought" (T.S. Eliot, "The Metaphysical Poets," Selected Essays: T.S. Eliot, p. 272.)

⁶ Johnson, "Preface to Shakespeare," II, p. 11.

⁷ Apparently Johnson did not perceive that Pope did expand his definition of wit to include more than just language in the two lines following those quoted:

Something, whose truth convinc'd at sight we find,
That gives us back the image of our mind.

⁸ Joseph Addison, Spectator No. 62.

⁹ Quoted from Joseph Brown, The Critical Opinions of Samuel Johnson, p. 267.

¹⁰ Johnson, Rambler 141. Although Johnson did not include the modern meaning of wit in his dictionary definitions, this passage shows that he was aware of it.

¹¹ Spectator, 62.

¹² Coleridge, Shakespearean Criticism, ed. Raysor, I, p. 212.

¹³ Johnson, "Review of an Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope," Works of Samuel Johnson, II, p. 419.

¹⁴ W.P. Ker, Form and Style in Poetry, p. 252.

¹⁵ J. Middleton Murry, "Metaphor," Selected Criticism, ed. Rees, p. 67.

¹⁶ Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, Ch. XIV.

¹⁷ Coleridge, Shakespearian Criticism, ed. Raysor, I, p. 212.

¹⁸ Coleridge, Table Talk, June 23, 1834. Quoted from Richards, Coleridge on Imagination, p. 77.

¹⁹ Richards, Coleridge on Imagination, pp. 84-5.

²⁰ Coleridge, Shakespearian Criticism, ed. Raysor, I, p. 212 and Table Talk, June 23, 1834. Quoted from Richards, Coleridge on Imagination, p. 77.

²¹ Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, p. 62.

- 22 Wordsworth, Wordsworth's Literary Criticism, ed. Smith, pp. 163-5. *Italics mine.*
- 23 *Italics mine.*
- 24 Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, Ch. XIV.
- 25 Coleridge, Shakespearian Criticism, ed. Raysor, I, p. 213.
- 26 Richards, Coleridge on Imagination, p. 83.
- 27 Wordsworth's Literary Criticism, ed. Smith, pp. 163 and 165.
- 28 For a diagrammatic comparison of these statements see Appendix I.
- 29 Richards, op. cit., p. 86.
- 30 Johnson, "Preface to Shakespeare," II, p. 171.
- 31 Quoted from W.H. Clemens, The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery, p. 10.
- 32 Clemens, op. cit., p. 12.
- 33 Spectator, 62.
- 34 *My italics.*
- 35 Murry, "Metaphor," Selected Criticism, ed. Rees, pp. 69-70.
- 36 W.J. Bate, The Achievement of Samuel Johnson, p. 214.
- 37 See Abrams, "Dr. Johnson's Spectacles" in New Light on Dr. Johnson, p. 179; and Emden, "Dr. Johnson and Imagery," RES (1950), I, pp. 23-38.
- 38 That he did not greatly appreciate comparison of concrete to concrete is explained by another principle.
- 39 Hagstrum, Samuel Johnson's Literary Criticism, p. 74.

- 40 Johnson, "Preface to Shakespeare," II, pp. 136-137.
- 41 Ibid., p. 141.
- 42 Ibid., p. 165.
- 43 Ibid., pp. 167-168.
- 44 Wordsworth's Literary Criticism, ed. Smith, p. 185.
- 45 "Preface to Shakespeare," II, p. 168.
- 46 Murry, op. cit., p. 70.
- 47 The Theory of Poetry, p. 206.
- 48 Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery, p. 25.
- 49 The Poetic Image, p. 17.
- 50 Convention and Revolt in Poetry, p. 9.
- 51 The Well-Wrought Urn, p. 243.
- 52 Murry, op. cit., p. 71.
- 53 Day Lewis, op. cit., p. 65.
- 54 Bate, op. cit., pp. 18-19.
- 55 Hagstrum, op. cit., p. 116.
- 56 In Butler, IX, 190 and in Dryden, IX, 408 he refers to "domestick images;" in Cowley, IX, 63, he refers to "religious images;" in Milton, IX, 160 he speaks of "images supplied by physiology;" and in Pope, XI, 168 he mentions images collected "from a more extensive circumference of science."
- 57 See L.H. Horstein, "Analysis of Imagery: A Critique of Literary Method," PMLA, LVII (1942), pp. 638-639. See also Clemens, op. cit., p. 8, and René Wellek and Austin Warren, op. cit., p. 214.

Part II

¹ C.F. Spurgeon, Shakespeare's Imagery and What it Tells Us, p. 4.

² See note 57, Part I, for references to critics who have done much to cast suspicion on the practise of psycho-analyzing a writer from his imagery.

³ See pp. 60-64 and 74, including note 56, in Part I.

⁴ For example, he points out in Milton that "the good and evil of eternity are too ponderous for the wings of wit." (IX, 172.) See also Dryden, IX, 333; Philips, IX, 211; Cowley, IX, 62 and 71; Pope, XI, 201.

⁵ Other bird and animal images include such references to birds of prey as: "the vultures of the theatre" (Dryden, IX, 333.); and references to lions such as his description of Milton as a "Lion that had no skill in dandling the Kid." (Milton, IX, 153.) He also refers to insects, as when he suggests that Pope "should ... have suffered the pamphlet to flutter and die without confessing that it stung him." (Pope, XI, 140.)

⁶ A further example of the same image refers to the compositions of Akenside: "They have doubtless brighter and darker parts: but, when they are once found to be generally dull, all further labour may be spared." (Akenside, XI, 363.) See also Milton, IX, 177; Addison, X, 140.

⁷ Another example of this image is his description of Savage willingly turning "his eyes from the light of reason when it would have discovered the illusion, and shewn him what he never wished to see, his real state." (Savage, X, 342.)

⁸ In Hammond he speaks of numbers that "never glide in a stream of melody." (X, 277.) And the first part of the "Ode to Ann Killegrew," "flows with a torrent of enthusiasm." (Dryden, IX, 416.)

⁹ Johnson says that Congreve's wit "is a meteor playing to and fro with alternate coruscations." (Congreve, X, 196.) And he says, with reference to Pope, that "self-love does not suspect the gleam of virtue to be the meteor of

fancy." (Pope, XI, 157.) See also Swift, XI, 13; Dryden, IX, 332.)

10 Another fine image in the same vein is his lament that Cowley "contented himself with a deciduous laurel of which the verdure in its spring was bright and gay, but which time has been continually stealing from his brows." (Cowley, IX, 62.) See also Cowley, IX, 7.

11 He finds Young's "Night Thoughts" to be "a wilderness of thought, in which the fertility of fancy scatters flowers of every hue and of every odour." (Young, XI, 343.)

12 Another example of weather imagery is his explanation that "at the succession of King James, [Sheffield] naturally expected still brighter sunshine; but all know how soon that reign began to gather clouds." (Sheffield, X, 151.) See also Addison, X, 92.

13 He also points out that Savage "was banished from the table of Lord Tyrconnel, and turned again adrift upon the world, without prospect of finding quickly any other harbour." (Savage, X, 333.)

14 Another example is his statement that Addison and Steele "sometimes towered far above their predecessors." (Addison, X, 87.) See also Addison, X, 108; 113; Dryden, IX, 424.

15 His famous comparison of Dryden and Pope uses a fire image: "If of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope's the heat is more regular and constant." (Pope, XI, 170.) He also speaks of Rochester's "blaze of reputation [which] is not yet quite extinguished." (Rochester, IX, 204.) And in Fenton he points out that "a blaze first pleases, and then tires the sight." (X, 232.)

16 Other examples include a reference in Milton to "a closet of knowledge" (IX, 137.), and the following characterization of Pope: "He expected that everything should give way to his ease or humour; as a child, whose parents will not hear her cry, has an unresisted dominion in the nursery." (XI, 150.) See also Pope, XI, 135; Milton, IX, 105; Denham, IX, 80, 82.

17 See also Dryden, IX, 361, 392.

18 One other aspect of domestic life that supplies a number

of images is money or wealth. He says that Dryden's "intellectual treasures were great though they were locked up from his own use." (Dryden, IX, 375.) And elsewhere, he says of Prior that "the spangles of wit which he could afford he knew how to polish; but he wanted the bullion of his master. Butler pours out a negligent profusion certain of the weight, but careless of the stamp. Prior has comparatively little, but with that little he makes a fine show." (Prior, X, 178.) See also Dryden, IX, 376; Cowley, IX, 6-7; Stepney, IX, 293.

19 Krutch suggests the same thing for other reasons. He describes how much Johnson enjoyed his part in settling the estate of Henry Thrale after his death. According to him; "from the earliest days of his acquaintance with the family he had shown, as scholars frequently do, that it flattered him to be employed in practical affairs." (Samuel Johnson, p. 504.)

20 Other fine gardening images include this illustration of Pope's early preparation to be a poet: "Pope foresaw the future efflorescence of imagery then budding in his mind, and resolved to spare no art, or industry of cultivation. The soft luxuriance of his fancy was already shooting, and all the gay varieties of diction were ready at his hand to colour and embellish it." (Pope, XI, 71.) He also suggests that the reader of Akenside's poetry "wanders through the gay diffusion, sometimes amazed, and sometimes delighted, but, after many turnings in the flowery labyrinth, comes out as he went in. He remarked little and laid hold on nothing." (Akenside, XI, 360.) See also Pope, XI, 182; Dryden, IX, 425, 342, 398; Rochester, IX, 205; Halifax, X, 148; Cowley, IX, 61.

21 Again, he points out that Collins' "lines commonly are of slow motion, clogged and impeded with clusters of consonants." (Collins, XI, 270.) See also Swift, XI, 38.

22 In another travel image, he indicates that Dryden "mentions but few books, and those such as lie in the beaten track of regular study; from which if he ever departs, he is in danger of losing himself in unknown regions." (Dryden, IX, 391.) See also Butler, IX, 194; Savage, X, 372; Milton, IX, 168.

23 He makes a general reference to horse-back riding in Milton: "Nobody can be taught faster than he can learn. The speed of the horseman is limited by the power of the horse." (IX, 97.) For other general references to other sports and amusements see also Pope, XI, 82 and 102; Dryden,

IX, 390; Savage, X, 342, 383; Cowley, IX, 41; Butler, IX, 200; Gray, XI, 378.

24 He suggests that in one of Pope's controversies "the shafts of satire were directed equally in vain against Cibber and Osborne; being repelled by the impenetrable impudence of one and deadened by the impassive dullness of the other." (Pope, XI, 141.) See also Savage, X, 317; Dryden, IX, 354.

25 Another fine example is his analysis of Congreve's characters as "a kind of intellectual gladiators; every sentence is to ward or strike; the contest of smartness is never intermitted." (Congreve, X, 196.) See also Congreve, X, 191; Savage, X, 366; Dryden, IX, 334 and 377; Pope, XI, 99, 103, 139, 113, 108.

26 In addition to the image quoted in note 24 above, Johnson describes Pope's controversy with Tickell during the course of which, "while [Pope] was ... meditating defence or revenge, his adversary sunk before him without a blow." (Pope, XI, 99.) Theobald "detected [Pope's] deficiencies with all the insolence of victory." (XI, 103.) In a controversy with Aaron Hill, Pope "first endeavours to wound, and is then afraid to own that he meant a blow." (XI, 113.) In the Dunciad, Pope "endeavoured to sink into contempt all the writers by whom he had been attacked, and some others whom he thought unable to defend themselves." (XI, 108.) And the publication of the revised fourth book of the Dunciad so exasperated Cibber that he "gave the town a pamphlet, in which he declares his resolution from that time never to bear another blow without returning it and to tire out his adversary by perseverance if he cannot conquer him by strength." (XI, 139.)

27 Using a similar image, he tells how Dryden "prefixed a discourse upon translation, which was then struggling for the liberty that it now enjoys. Why it should find any difficulty in breaking the shackles of verbal interpretation ... it would be difficult to conjecture...." (Dryden, IX, 353.) See also Milton, IX, 173 and 179.

28 He explains why all the stanzas of Dryden's "Ode to Anne Killegrew" are not equal by saying: "An imperial crown cannot be one continued diamond; the gems must be held together by some less valuable matter." (Dryden, IX, 416.) See also Swift, X, 20-21.

29 Criminal activity supplies him with an image to apply to Prior: "I have traced him among French Epigrammatists, and have been informed that he poached for prey among obscure

authors." (Prior, X, 180.) And in Waller he refers to another criminal activity to illustrate the nature of flattery: "He that has flattery ready for all whom the vicissitudes of the world happen to exalt, must be scorned as a prostituted mind, that may retain the glitter of wit, but has lost the dignity of virtue." (Waller, IX, 253.)

30 Other references to the building trade include this image that he uses to describe Savage's "Wanderer:" "The whole performance is not so much a regular fabrick, as a heap of shining materials thrown together by accident, which strike rather with the solemn magnificence of a stupendous ruin, than the elegant grandeur of a finished pile." (Savage, X, 324-5.) See also Prior, X, 183; Dryden, IX, 414, 419; Hughes, X, 145; Milton, IX, 164.

31 Another image from metallurgy is used to describe Prior's "Solomon:" "He had infused into it much thought; had often polished it to elegance, often dignified it with splendour, and sometimes heightened it to sublimity." (Prior, X, 179.) See also Dryden, IX, 387-8.

32 In Cowley he criticizes "the man that sits down ... and heats his mind to an elaborate purgation of his character from crimes which he was never within the possibility of committing." (IX, 17.) See also Butler, IX, 200.

33 He also suggests that the metaphysicals can no more represent "by their slender conceits and laboured particularities, the prospects of nature, or the scenes of life, than he who dissects a sun-beam with a prism can exhibit the wide effulgence of a summer noon." (Cowley, IX, 22.) See also Savage, X, 133.

34 See also Butler, IX, 196; Pope, XI, 203; Savage, X, 332.

35 Sometimes his images refer to mental disease or deformity: "The man who threatens the world is always ridiculous; for the world can easily go on without him I have heard of an idiot, who used to revenge his vexations by lying all night upon the bridge." (Pope, XI, 115.) Elsewhere, he declares himself unable to conceal or excuse the depravity "of the mind that can trade in corruption, and can deliberately pollute itself with ideal wickedness for the purpose of spreading the contagion in society." (Dryden, IX, 376.) See also Pope, XI, 161, 102, 136; Milton, IX, 180; Savage, X, 295, 342.

36 In another similar image he describes the nature of

Thomson's privilege of travelling with a well-educated man: "He may therefore now be supposed to have revelled in all the joys of intellectual luxury; he was every day feasted with instructive novelties." (Thomson, XI, 226.) See also Pope, XI, 94, 185, 194; Milton, IX, 111, 166.

37 See also Swift, XI, 17; Dryden, IX, 377, 394 for other references to human physiology.

38 In another such reference he describes the metaphysical poets as "Epicurean deities, making remarks on the actions of men, and the vicissitudes of life, without interest and without emotion." (Cowley, IX, 21.) See also Cowley, IX, 7, 16, 148; Milton, IX, 153; Swift, X, 26; Addison, X, 110; Dryden, IX, 340, 445; Pope, XI, 56, 95, 187.

39 Another personification that may be classed as an image is his criticism of Milton's "Lycidas:" "For passion runs not after remote allusions and obscure opinions. Passion plucks no berries from the myrtle and ivy, nor calls upon Arethuse and Mincius, nor tells of rough satyrs and fauns with cloven heels." (Milton, IX, 153.) See also Thomson, XI, 227; Cowley, IX, 19; Dryden, IX, 388; Addison, X, 140.

40 He criticizes the metaphysical poets again because they "wrote rather as beholders than partakers of human nature; as Beings looking upon good and evil, impassive and at leisure." (Cowley, IX, 21.) See also Pope, XI, 136; Cowley, IX, 7; Addison, X, 140.

41 "Fancy can hardly forbear to conjecture with what temper Milton surveyed the silent progress of his work, and marked its reputation stealing its way in a kind of subterranean current through fear and silence." (Milton, IX, 138.)

42 "Learning once made popular is no longer learning; it has the appearance of something which we have bestowed upon ourselves as the dew appears to rise from the field which it refreshes." (Dryden, IX, 386.)

43 "It is pleasant to see great works in their seminal state, pregnant with latent possibilities of excellence; nor could there be any more delightful entertainment than to trace their gradual growth and expansion" (Milton, IX, 120.)

44 W.K. Wimsatt, The Prose Style of Samuel Johnson, p. 65.

- ⁴⁵ W.J. Bate, The Achievement of Samuel Johnson, p. 173.
- ⁴⁶ Quoted by Wimsatt, op. cit., p. 66.
- ⁴⁷ Samuel Johnson, p. 463.
- ⁴⁸ The Achievement of Samuel Johnson, p. 55.
- ⁴⁹ Samuel Johnson, p. 98.
- ⁵⁰ This refers, of course, to the 1810 edition edited by Murphy.
- ⁵¹ See Appendix II for the exact number of images per page.
- ⁵² The critical portions contain one image per 2.8 pages, and the biographical sections contain one image per 4.2 pages.
- ⁵³ Hawkins states that "in his own judgement of the lives of the poets, Johnson gave the preference to that of Cowley Others have assigned to Dryden's life the pre-eminence" (The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D., p. 240.) And Hodgart speaks of Johnson's "masterpiece, the Life of Pope" (Samuel Johnson, p. 98.)
- ⁵⁴ He makes a further comparison of the poetry of Dryden and Rymer: "With Dryden we are wandering in quest of truth; whom we find, if we find her at all, drest in the graces of elegance; and, if we miss her, the labour of the pursuit rewards itself; we are led only through fragrance and flowers. Rymer, without taking a nearer, takes a rougher way; every step is to be made through thorns and brambles; and Truth, if we meet her appears repulsive by her mien and ungraceful by her habit." (Dryden, IX, 388.)

APPENDIX I

COLERIDGE	JOHNSON	WORDSWORTH
<p>1. <u>Imagination</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness with difference; of the general with the concrete; the idea with the image; the individual with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness with old and familiar objects. - How many images and feelings are here brought together without <u>effort</u> and without <u>discord</u>. - Milton had a highly imaginative, Cowley a very <u>fanciful</u> mind. 	<p>1. <u>True Wit</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - at once natural and new - though not obvious, is upon its first production <u>acknowledged to be just</u> - he that never found it, wonders how he missed - The metaphysical thoughts are often new but seldom natural; they are not obvious, but neither are they just; and the reader, far from wondering that he missed them, wonders more frequently by what perverseness of industry they were ever found. - To wit of this kind the metaphysical poets have seldom risen. 	<p>1. <u>Imagination</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When the imagination frames a comparison if it does not strike on the first presentation, a sense of the truth of the likeness, from the moment that it is perceived, grows - and continues to grow - upon the mind; the resemblance depending less upon outline of form and feature than upon expression and effect; less upon casual and outstanding, than upon inherent and internal properties. - The combinations of imagination are momentous and the mind acknowledges their <u>justice</u> and reasonableness.
<p>2. <u>Fancy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The elements are dissimilar in the main by some one point or more of likeness distinguished. - The elements have no connexion natural or moral, but are <u>yoked together</u> by the poet by means of some accidental coincidence. 	<p>2. <u>Metaphysical Wit</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a kind of <u>discordia concors</u> - a combination of dissimilar images - discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike - the most heterogeneous ideas are <u>yoked</u> by violence together - nature and art are ransacked for illustrations, comparisons and allusions - their learning instructs, and their subtlety <u>surprises</u> 	<p>2. <u>Fancy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - She prides herself upon the curious subtilty and the successful elaboration with which she can detect their <u>lurking affinities</u>. - The law under which the processes of fancy are carried on is as capricious as the accidents of things and the effects are <u>surprising</u>, playful, ludicrous, amusing, tender, or pathetic as the objects happen to be oppositely produced or fortunately combined.

Category	Specific Area	Milton	Pope	Dryden	Cowley	Savage	Swift	Addison	Misc. Lives	Total in Spec. Area	Total Category	Per cent in Spec. Area	Per cent in Category
Outdoor Life	Animals and Birds	4	8	3	2				2	19		7.0	
	Light and Dark	3			2	3	1	1	2	12	72	4.5	27
	Rivers	1		2	2		2		2	9		3.3	
	Cosmic		1	3			1		2	7		2.5	
	Misc.	2	1	5	2	3		6	6	25		9.3	
Domestic Life	Various	4	3	6	7		3	4	13		40		15
National Life and Institutions	Warfare		10	5		2		1	4	22	38	8.2	14
	Misc.	4	1	4		1	3		3	16		5.9	
Sports and Amusements	Sports	1	2	1	4	2			3	13	39	4.8	14
	Gardening		4	4	3				4	15		5.6	
	Travel	1		2	1	1	1	3	2	11		4.1	
Occupations and Trades or Skills	Arts	3	1	4		2		1	5	6		2.2	12
	Crafts									10	34	3.7	
	Commerce	1	3	2	1	1		1		9		3.3	
	Practical Science	1		1	3	1				9		3.3	
Human Body	Food	2	4						1	7		2.5	
	Disease and Deformity	1	4	1					1	10	23	3.7	9
	Other Natural Processes	1		3			1		1	6		2.2	
	Classical Personification	1	3	2	4		1	1	1	12		4.8	9
Literary or Imaginative	Supernatural	1	1	2	1	1		1	1	6	23	2.2	
			1	2				1		5		1.9	
TOTAL		31	47	52	32	19	14	19	56		270		
Number Per Page		1/3.2	1/3.5	1/2.8	1/2.2	1/6.5	1/3.5	1/3.6	1/9.5		1/4.6		

TWO MAJOR POEMS

RASSELAS

Category	Specific Area	Total in Spec. Area	Total in Category	Per cent in Spec. Area	Per cent in Category	Total in Spec. Area	Total in Category	Per cent in Spec. Area	Per cent in Category
Outdoor Life	Animals and Birds	13		18.5		10		14.4	
	Light and Dark	4	30	5.7	43.0	2	19	3.0	27.2
	Rivers	5		7.0		4		5.2	
	Cosmic	4		5.7		0		0	
	Misc.	4		5.7		3		4.3	
Domestic Life	Various	5	5	7.0	7.0	5	5		7.0
National Life and Institutions	Warfare	1	7	1.4	10.0	12	19	17.2	27.2
	Misc.	6		8.5		7		10.0	
Sports and Amusements	Sports	1	3	1.4	4.4	5	7	7.0	10.0
	Gardening	2		3.0		0		0	
	Travel					2		3.0	
Occupations and Trades or Skills	Arts	0		0		3		4.3	
	Crafts	0		0		3		4.3	
	Commerce	0	0	0	0	2	8	3.0	11.6
	Practical								
	Science	0		0		0		0	
Human Body	Food	6		8.5		3		4.1	
	Disease and Deformity		16	13	23.0	6	9	8.5	12.6
	Natural	9							
	Processes	1		1.4		0		0	
Literary or Imaginative	Classical	0	8	0	11.4	1	3	1.4	4.3
	Personification	4		5.7		0		0	
	Supernatural	4		5.7		2		2.9	
TOTAL			69				70		
Number per page			1/2						

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